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AN

ATTIC PHILOSOPHER IN PARIS;

OR,

A PEEP AT THE WORLD FROM A GARRET.

BEING THE JOURNAL OF A HAPPY MAN.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

EMILE SOUVESTRE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

We know a man who, in the midst of the fever of restlessness and of ambition which racks society in our times, continues to fill his humble part in the world without a murmur, and who still preserves, so to speak, the taste for poverty. With no other fortune than a small clerkship, which enables him to live within the narrow limits which separate competence from want, our philosopher looks from the height of his attic upon society as upon a sea, of which he neither covets the riches nor fears the wrecks. Being too insignificant to excite the envy of any one, he sleeps peacefully, wrapped in his obscurity.

Not that he retreats into egotism as a tortoise into its shell! He is the man of whom Terence says that "nothing human seems foreign to him!" All external objects and incidents are reflected in his mind as in a camera obscura, which presents their images in a picture. He "looks at society as it is, in itself," with the patient curiousness which

belongs to recluses; and he writes a monthly journal of what he has seen or thought. It is the "Calendar of His Impressions," as he is wont to call it.

We have been allowed to look over it, and have extracted some pages which may make the reader acquainted with the commonplace adventures of an unknown thinker in those twelve hostelries of time called months.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

The Attic New Year's Gifts..... 1

CHAPTER II.

The Carnival..... 12

CHAPTER III.

What We May Learn by Looking Out of Window..... 25

CHAPTER IV.

Let us Love One Another..... 37

CHAPTER V.

Compensation..... 50

CHAPTER VI.

Uncle Maurice..... 64

CHAPTER VII.

The Price of Power and the Worth of Fame..... 80

CHAPTER VIII.

Misanthropy and Repentance..... 97

CHAPTER IX.

The Family of Michael Arout..... 109

CHAPTER X.

Our Country..... 127

CHAPTER XI.

Moral Use of Inventories..... 146

CHAPTER XII.

The End of the Year..... 166

In the Chimney Corner..... 183

AN ATTIC PHILOSOPHER IN PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ATTIC NEW YEAR'S GIFTS.

January 1st.—The day of the month came into my mind as soon as I awoke. Another year is separated from the chain of ages and drops into the gulf of the past! The crowd hasten to welcome her young sister. But while all looks are turned toward the future, mine revert to the past. Every one smiles upon the new queen; but, in spite of myself, I think of her whom time has just wrapped in her winding-sheet. The past year!—at least I know what she was and what she has given me; while this one comes surrounded by all the forebodings of the unknown. What does she hide in the clouds which mantle her? Is it the storm or the sunshine? Just now it rains, and I feel my mind as gloomy as the sky. I have a holiday to-day; but what can one do with a rainy day? I walk up and down my attic out of temper, and I determine to light my fire.

Unfortunately the matches are bad, the chimney smokes, the wood goes out! I throw down my bellows in disgust, and sink into my old arm-chair.

In truth, why should I rejoice to see the birth of a new year? All those who are already in the streets, with the holiday looks and smiling faces—do they understand what makes them so gay? Do they even know what is the meaning of this holiday, or whence comes the custom of New Year's gifts?

Here my mind pauses to prove to itself its superiority over that of the vulgar. I make a parenthesis in my ill-temper in favor of my vanity, and I bring together all the evidence which my knowledge can produce.

(The old Romans divided the year into ten months only; it was Numa Pompilius who added January and February. The former took its name from Janus, to whom it was dedicated. As it opened the new year, they surrounded its commencement with good omens, and thence came the custom of visits between neighbors, of wishing happiness, and of New Year's gifts. The presents given by the Romans were symbolic. They consisted of dry figs, dates, honeycomb, as emblems of "the sweetness of the auspices under which the year should begin its course," and a small piece of money called *stips*, which foreboded riches.)

Here I close the parenthesis, and return to my ill-humor. The little speech* I have just addressed to myself has restored me my self-satisfaction, but made me more dissatisfied with others. I could now enjoy my breakfast; but the portress has forgotten

* *Spitch* in the original.

my morning's milk, and the pot of preserves is empty! Any one else would have been vexed: as for me, I affect the most supreme indifference. There remains a hard crust, which I break by main strength, and which I carelessly nibble, as a man far above the vanities of the world and of fresh rolls.

However, I do not know why my thoughts should grow more gloomy by reason of the difficulties of mastication. I once read the story of an Englishman who hanged himself because they had brought him his tea without sugar. There are hours in life when the most trifling cross takes the form of a calamity. Our tempers are like an opera-glass, which makes the object small or great according to the end you look through.

Generally, the prospect which opens out before my window delights me. It is a mountain range of roofs, with ridges crossing, interlacing, and piled on one another, and upon which tall chimneys raise their peaks. It was but yesterday that they had an Alpine aspect to me, and I waited for the first snow-storm to see glaciers among them; to-day, I only see tiles and stone flues. The pigeons, which assisted my rural illusions, seem no more than miserable birds which have mistaken the roof for the back yard; the smoke, which rises in light clouds, instead of making me dream of the panting of Vesuvius, reminds me of kitchen preparations and dish-water; and lastly, the telegraph, that I see far off on the old tower of Montmartre, has the effect of a vile gallows stretching its arms over the city.

My eyes, thus hurt by all they meet, fall upon the great man's house which faces my attic.

The influence of New Year's Day is visible there. The servants have an air of eagerness proportioned to the value of their New Year's gifts, received or expected. I see the master of the house crossing the court with the morose look of a man who is forced to be generous; and the visitors increase, followed by shop porters who carry flowers, band-boxes, or toys. All at once the great gates are opened, and a new carriage, drawn by thoroughbred horses, draws up before the door-steps. They are, without doubt, the New Year's gift presented to the mistress of the house by her husband; for she comes herself to look at the new equipage. Very soon she gets into it with a little girl, all streaming with laces, feathers, and velvets, and loaded with parcels which she goes to distribute as New Year's gifts. The door is shut, the windows are drawn up, the carriage sets off.

Thus all the world are exchanging good wishes and presents to-day: I alone have nothing to give or to receive. Poor Solitary! I do not even know one chosen being for whom I might offer a prayer.

Then let my wishes for a happy New Year go, and seek out all my unknown friends—lost in the multitude which murmurs like the ocean at my feet!

To you first, hermits in cities, for whom death and poverty have created a solitude in the midst of the crowd! unhappy laborers, who are condemned to toil in melancholy, and eat your daily bread in

silence and desertion, and whom God has withdrawn from the intoxicating pangs of love or friendship!

To you, fond dreamers, who pass through life with your eyes turned toward some polar star, while you tread with indifference over the rich harvests of reality!

To you, honest fathers, who lengthen out the evening to maintain your families! to you, poor widows, weeping and working by a cradle! to you, young men, resolutely set to open for yourselves a path in life, large enough to lead through it the wife of your choice! to you, all brave soldiers of work and of self-sacrifice!

To you, lastly, whatever your title and your name, who love good, who pity the suffering; who walk through the world like the symbolical Virgin of Byzantium, with both arms open to the human race!

Here I am suddenly interrupted by loud and increasing chirpings. I look about me: my window is surrounded with sparrows picking up the crumbs of bread which in my brown-study I had just scattered on the roof. At this sight a flash of light broke upon my saddened heart. I deceived myself just now when I complained that I had nothing to give: thanks to me, the sparrows of this part of the town will have their New Year's gifts!

Twelve O'clock.—A knock at my door; a poor girl comes in and greets me by name. At first I do not recollect her; but she looks at me and smiles. Ah! it is Paulette! But it is almost a year since I have

seen her, and Paulette is no longer the same: the other day she was a child, now she is almost a young woman.

Paulette is thin, pale, and miserably clad; but she has always the same open and straightforward look —the same mouth, smiling at every word, as if to court your sympathy—the same voice, somewhat timid, yet expressing fondness. Paulette is not pretty—she is even thought plain; as for me, I think her charming. Perhaps that is not on her account, but on my own. Paulette appears to me as a part of one of my happiest recollections.

It was the evening of a public holiday. Our principal buildings were illumihated with festoons of fire, a thousand flags waved in the night winds, and the fireworks had just shot forth their spouts of flame into the midst of the Champ de Mars. All of a sudden, one of those unaccountable alarms which strike a multitude with panic fell upon the dense crowd: they cry out, they rush on headlong; the weaker ones fall, and the frightened crowd tramples them down in its convulsive struggles. I escaped from the confusion by a miracle, and was hastening away, when the cries of a perishing child arrested me: I reëntered that human chaos, and, after unheard-of exertions, I brought Paulette out of it at the peril of my life.

That was two years ago: since then I had not seen the child again but at long intervals, and I had almost forgotten her; but Paulette's memory was that of a grateful heart, and she came at the begin-

ning of the year to offer me her wishes for my happiness. She brought me, besides, a wallflower in full bloom. She herself had planted and reared it: it was something that belonged wholly to herself; for it was by her care, her perseverance, and her patience that she had obtained it.

The wallflower had grown in a common pot; but Paulette, who is a bandbox maker, had put it into a case of varnished paper, ornamented with arabesques. These might have been in better taste, but I did not feel the attention and good-will the less.

This unexpected present, the little girl's modest blushes, the compliments she stammered out, dispelled, as by a sunbeam, the kind of mist which had gathered round my mind; my thoughts suddenly changed from the leaden tints of evening to the brightest colors of dawn. I made Paulette sit down and questioned her with a light heart.

At first the little girl replied by monosyllables; but very soon the tables were turned, and it was I who interrupted with short interjections her long and confidential talk. The poor child leads a hard life. She was left an orphan long since, with a brother and sister, and lives with an old grandmother, who has "brought them up to poverty," as she always calls it.

However, Paulette now helps her to make bandboxes, her little sister Perrine begins to use the needle, and her brother Henry is apprentice to a printer. All would go well if it were not for losses

and want of work—if it were not for clothes which wear out, for appetites which grow larger, and for the winter, when you cannot get sunshine for nothing. Paulette complains that her candles go too quickly and that her wood costs too much. The fireplace in their garret is so large that a fagot makes no more show in it than a match; it is so near the roof that the wind blows the rain down it, and in winter it hails upon the hearth, so they have left off using it. Henceforth they must be content with an earthen chafing-dish, upon which they cook their meals. The grandmother had often spoken of a stove that was for sale at the broker's close by; but he asked 7 francs for it, and the times are too hard for such an expense: the family, therefore, resign themselves to cold for economy!

As Paulette spoke, I felt more and more that I was losing my fretfulness and low spirits. The first disclosures of the little bandbox maker created within me a wish that soon became a plan. I questioned her about her daily occupations, and she informed me that on leaving me she must go, with her brother, her sister, and grandmother, to the different people for whom they work. My plan was immediately settled. I told the child that I would go to see her in the evening, and I sent her away with fresh thanks.

I placed the wallflower in the open window, where a ray of sunshine bid it welcome; the birds were singing around, the sky had cleared up, and

the day, which began so loweringly, had become bright. I sang as I moved about my room, and, having hastily put on my hat and coat, I went out.

Three O'clock.—All is settled with my neighbor, the chimney-doctor; he will repair my old stove, and answers for its being as good as new. At five o'clock we are to set out, and put it up in Paulette's grandmother's room.

Midnight.—All has gone off well. At the hour agreed upon I was at the old bandbox maker's; she was still out. My Piedmontese* fixed the stove, while I arranged a dozen logs in the great fireplace, taken from my winter stock. I shall make up for them by warming myself with walking, or by going to bed earlier.

My heart beat at every step which was heard on the staircase; I trembled lest they should interrupt me in my preparations, and should thus spoil my intended surprise. But no—see everything ready: the lighted stove murmurs gently, the little lamp burns upon the table, and a bottle of oil for it is provided on the shelf. The chimney-doctor is gone. Now my fear lest they should come is changed into impatience at their not coming. At last I hear children's voices; here they are: they push open the door and rush in—but they all stop in astonishment.

At the sight of the lamp, the stove, and the vis-

* In Paris a chimney-sweeper is named "Piedmontese" or "Savoyard," as they usually come from that country.

itor, who stands there like a magician in the midst of these wonders, they draw back almost frightened. Paulette is the first to comprehend it, and the arrival of the grandmother, who is more slowly mounting the stairs, finishes the explanation. Then come tears, ecstasies, thanks!

But the wonders are not yet ended. The little sister opens the oven, and discovers some chestnuts just roasted; the grandmother puts her hand on the bottles of cider arranged on the dresser; and I draw forth from the basket that I have hidden a cold tongue, a pot of butter, and some fresh rolls.

Now their wonder turns into admiration; the little family have never seen such a feast! They lay the cloth, they sit down, they eat; it is a complete banquet for all, and each contributes his share to it. I had brought only the supper: and the bandbox maker and her children supplied the enjoyment.

What bursts of laughter at nothing! What a hubbub of questions which waited for no reply, of replies which answered no question! The old woman herself shared in the wild merriment of the little ones. I have always been struck at the ease with which the poor forget their wretchedness. Being only used to live for the present, they make a gain of every pleasure as soon as it offers itself. But the surfeited rich are more difficult to satisfy: they require time and everything to suit before they will consent to be happy.

The evening has passed like a moment. The old woman told me the history of her life, sometimes

smiling, sometimes drying her eyes. Perrine sang an old ballad with her fresh young voice. Henry told us what he knows of the great writers of the day, to whom he has to carry their proofs. At last we were obliged to separate, not without fresh thanks on the part of the happy family.

I have come home slowly, ruminating with a full heart and pure enjoyment on the simple events of my evening. It has given me much comfort and much instruction. Now no New Year's Day will come amiss to me; I know that no one is so unhappy as to have nothing to give and nothing to receive.

As I came in, I met my rich neighbor's new equipage. She, too, had just returned from her evening's party; and, as she sprang from the carriage-step with feverish impatience, I heard her murmur—"At last!"

I, when I left Paulette's family, said—So "soon!"

CHAPTER II.

THE CARNIVAL.

February 20th.—What a noise out of doors! What is the meaning of these shouts and cries? Ah! I recollect: this is the last day of the Carnival, and the maskers are passing.

Christianity has not been able to abolish the noisy bacchanalian festivals of the pagan times, but it has changed the names. That which it has given to these "days of liberty" announces the ending of the feasts and the month of fasting which should follow; "carn-i-val" means literally "down with flesh meat!" It is a forty days' farewell to the "blessed pullets and fat hams," so celebrated by Pantagruel's minstrel. Man prepares for privation by satiety, and finishes his sin thoroughly before he begins to repent.

Why, in all ages and among every people, do we meet with some one of these mad festivals? Must we believe that it requires such an effort for men to be reasonable that the weaker ones have need of rests at intervals? The monks of La Trappe, who are condemned to silence by their rule, are allowed to speak once in a month, and on this day they all

talk at once from the rising to the setting of the sun.

Perhaps it is the same in the world. As we are obliged all the year to be decent, orderly, and reasonable, we make up for such a long restraint during the Carnival. It is a door opened to the incongruous fancies and wishes which have hitherto been crowded back into a corner of our brain. For a moment the slaves become the masters, as in the days of the Saturnalia, and everything is given up to the "fools of the family."

The shouts in the square redouble; the troops of masks increase—on foot, in carriages, and on horseback. It is now who can attract the most attention by making a figure for a few hours, or by exciting curiosity or envy; to-morrow they will all return, dull and exhausted, to the employments and troubles of yesterday.

Alas! thought I with vexation, each of us is like these masqueraders; our whole life is often but an unsightly carnival! And yet man has need of holidays, to relax his mind, rest his body, and open his heart. Can he not have them, then, with these coarse pleasures? Economists have been long inquiring what is the best disposal of the industry of the human race. Ah! if I could only discover the best disposal of its leisure! It is easy enough to find it work; but who will find it relaxation? Work supplies the daily bread; but it is cheerfulness which gives it a relish. O philosophers! go in quest of pleasure! find us amusements without brutality,

enjoyments without selfishness; in a word, invent a Carnival which will please everybody and bring shame to no one.

Three O'clock.—I have just shut my window and stirred up my fire. As this is a holiday for everybody, I will make it one for myself too. So I light the little lamp over which, on grand occasions, I make a cup of the coffee that my portress' son brought from the Levant, and I look in my bookcase for one of my favorite authors.

First, here is the amusing parson of Meudon; but his characters are too fond of talking slang: Voltaire; but he disheartens men by always bantering them: Molière; but he hinders one's laughter by making one think: Lesage; let us stop at him. Being profound rather than grave, he preaches virtue while ridiculing vice; if bitterness is sometimes to be found in his writings, it is always in the garb of mirth: he sees the miseries of the world without despising it, and knows its cowardly tricks without hating it.

Let us call up all the heroes of his book. Gil Blas, Fabrice, Sangrado, the Archbishop of Granada, the Duke of Lerma, Aurora, Scipio! Ye gay or graceful figures, rise before my eyes, people my solitude; bring hither for my amusement the world-carnival, of which you are the brilliant maskers!

Unfortunately, at the very moment I made this invocation, I recollected I had a letter to write which could not be put off. One of my attic neighbors came yesterday to ask me to do it. He is a

cheerful old man and has a passion for pictures and prints. He comes home almost every day with a drawing or painting—probably of little value ; for I know he lives penuriously, and even the letter that I am to write for him shows his poverty. His only son, who was married in England, is just dead, and his widow—left without any means, and with an old mother and a child—had written to beg for a home. M. Antoine asked me first to translate the letter, and then to write a refusal. I had promised that he should have this answer to-day : before everything, let us fulfill our promises.

The sheet of Bath paper is before me, I have dipped my pen into the ink, and I rub my forehead to invite forth a sally of ideas, when I perceive that I have not my dictionary. Now, a Parisian who would speak English without a dictionary is like a child without leading-strings ; the ground trembles under him and he stumbles at the first step. I run then to the bookbinder's where I left my Johnson, and who lives close by in the square.

The door is half-open ; I hear low groans ; I enter without knocking, and I see the bookbinder by the bedside of his fellow-lodger. This latter has a violent fever and delirium. Pierre looks at him perplexed and out of humor. I learn from him that his comrade was not able to get up in the morning, and that since then he has become worse every hour.

I ask if they have sent for a doctor.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" replied Pierre roughly ; "one

must have money in one's pocket for that, and this fellow has only debts instead of savings."

"But you," said I, rather astonished; "are you not his friend?"

"Friend!" interrupted the bookbinder. "Yes, as much as the shaft-horse is friend to the leader—on condition that each will take his share of the draught and eat his feed by himself."

"You do not intend, however, to leave him without any help?"

"Bah! he may keep in his bed till to-morrow, as I'm going to the ball."

"You mean to leave him alone?"

"Well! must I miss a party of pleasure at Courtville* because this fellow is light-headed?" asked Pierre sharply. "I have promised to meet some friends at old Desnoyer's. Those who are sick may take their broth; my physic is white wine."

So saying, he untied a bundle, out of which he took the fancy costume of a waterman, and proceeded to dress himself in it.

In vain I tried to awaken some fellow-feeling for the unfortunate man who lay groaning there, close by him; being entirely taken up with the thoughts of his expected pleasure, Pierre would hardly so much as hear me. At last his coarse selfishness provoked me. I began reproaching instead of remonstrating with him, and I declared him responsible for the consequences which such a desertion must bring upon the sick man.

* A Paris Vauxhall.

At this the bookbinder, who was just going, stopped with an oath, and stamped his foot. "Am I to spend my Carnival in heating water for foot-baths, pray?"

"You must not leave your comrade to die without help!" I replied.

"Let him go to the hospital, then!"

"How can he by himself?"

Pierre seemed to make up his mind.

"Well, I'm going to take him," resumed he; "besides, I shall get rid of him sooner. Come, get up, comrade!" He shook his comrade, who had not taken off his clothes. I observed that he was too weak to walk, but the bookbinder would not listen: he made him get up, and half-dragged, half-supported him to the lodge of the porter, who ran for a hackney carriage. I saw the sick man get into it, almost fainting, with the impatient waterman; and they both set off, one perhaps to die, the other to dine at Courtville gardens!

Six O'clock.—I have been to knock at my neighbor's door, who opened it himself; and I have given him his letter, finished at last, and directed to his son's widow. M. Antoine thanked me gratefully, and made me sit down.

It was the first time I had been into the attic of the old amateur. Curtains stained with damp and hanging down in rags, a cold stove, a bed of straw, two broken chairs, composed all the furniture. At the end of the room were a great number of prints in a heap, and paintings without frames turned against the wall.

At the moment I came in, the old man was making his dinner on some hard crusts of bread, which he was soaking in a glass of *eau sucrée.* He perceived that my eyes fell upon his hermit fare, and he looked a little ashamed.

"There is nothing to tempt you in my supper, neighbor," said he with a smile.

I replied that at least I thought it a very philosophical one for the Carnival.

M. Antoine shook his head, and went on again with his supper.

"Every one keeps his holidays in his own way," resumed he, beginning again to dip a crust into his glass. "There are several sorts of epicures, and all feasts are not meant to regale the palate; there are some also for the ears and the eyes."

I looked involuntarily round me, as if to seek for the invisible banquet which could make up to him for such a supper.

Without doubt he understood me; for he got up slowly and, with the magisterial air of a man confident in what he is about to do, he rummaged behind several picture frames, drew forth a painting, over which he passed his hand, and silently placed it under the light of the lamp.

It represented a fine-looking old man, seated at table with his wife, his daughter, and his children, and singing to the accompaniment of musicians who appeared in the background. At first sight I recognized the subject, which I had often admired at the Louvre, and I declared it to be a splendid copy of Jordaens.

"A copy!" cried M. Antoine; "say an original, neighbor, and an original retouched by Rubens! Look closer at the head of the old man, the dress of the young woman, and the accessories. One can count the pencil strokes of the Hercules of painters. It is not only a masterpiece, sir; it is a treasure—a relic! The picture at the Louvre may be a pearl, this is a diamond!"

And resting it against the stove, so as to place it in the best light, he fell again to soaking his crusts, without taking his eyes off the wonderful picture. One would have said that the sight of it gave the crusts an unexpected relish, for he chewed them slowly, and emptied his glass by little sips. His shriveled features became smooth, his nostrils expanded; it was indeed, as he said himself, "a feast of the eyes."

"You see that I also have my treat," resumed he, nodding his head with an air of triumph. "Others may run after dinners and balls; as for me, this is the pleasure I give myself for my Carnival."

"But if this painting is really so precious," replied I, "it ought to be worth a high price."

"Eh! eh!" said M. Antoine, with an air of proud indifference. "In good times, a good judge might value it at somewhere about 20,000 francs."

I started back.

"And you have bought it?" cried I.

"For nothing," replied he, lowering his voice. "These brokers are asses; mine mistook this for a

student's copy; he let me have it for 50 louis, ready money! This morning I took them to him, and now he wishes to be off the bargain."

"This morning!" repeated I, involuntarily casting my eyes on the letter containing the refusal that M. Antoine had made me write to his son's widow, and which was still on the little table.

He took no notice of my exclamation, and went on contemplating the work of Jordaens in a kind of ecstasy.

"What a knowledge of chiaroscuro!" murmured he, biting his last crust in delight. "What relief! what fire! Where can one find such transparency of color! such magical lights! such force! such nature!"

As I was listening to him in silence, he mistook my astonishment for admiration and clapped me on the shoulder.

"You are dazzled," said he merrily; "you did not expect such a treasure! What do you say to the bargain I have made?"

"Pardon me," replied I gravely; "but I think you might have done better."

M. Antoine raised his head.

"How!" cried he; "do you take me for a man likely to be deceived about the merit or value of a painting?"

"I neither doubt your taste nor your skill; but I cannot help thinking that, for the price of this picture of a family party, you might have had——"

"What then?"

"The family itself, sir."

The old amateur cast a look at me, not of anger, but of contempt. In his eyes I had evidently just proved myself a barbarian, incapable of understanding the arts and unworthy of enjoying them. He got up without answering me, hastily took up the Jordaens, and replaced it in its hiding-place behind the prints.

It was a sort of dismissal; I took leave of him and went away.

Seven O'clock.—When I come in again I find my water boiling over my little lamp, and I busy myself in grinding my Mocha and setting out my coffee things.

The getting coffee ready is the most delicate and most attractive of domestic operations to one who lives alone: it is the grand work of a bachelor's housekeeping.

Coffee is, so to say, just the mid-point between bodily and spiritual nourishment. It acts agreeably, and at the same time, upon the senses and the thoughts. Its very fragrance gives a sort of delightful activity to the wits; it is a genius who lends wings to our fancy and transports it to the land of the Arabian Nights.

When I am buried in my old easy-chair, my feet on the fender before a blazing fire, my ear soothed by the singing of the coffee-pot, which seems to gossip with my fire-irons, the sense of smell gently excited by the aroma of the Arabian bean, and my eyes shaded by my cap pulled down over them, it

often seems as if each cloud of the fragrant steam took a distinct form. As in the mirages of the desert, in each as it rises, I see some image of which my mind had been longing for the reality.

At first the vapor increases and its color deepens. I see a cottage on a hillside; behind is a garden shut in by a whitethorn hedge, and through the garden runs a brook, on the banks of which I hear the bees humming.

Then the view opens still more. See those fields planted with apple-trees and in which I distinguish a plow and horses waiting for their master! Further on, in a part of the wood which rings with the sound of the ax, I perceive the woodsman's hut, roofed with turf and branches; and in the midst of all these rural pictures I seem to see a figure of myself gliding about. It is my ghost walking in my dream!

The bubbling of the water, ready to boil over, compels me to break off my meditations, in order to fill up the coffee-pot. I then remember that I have no cream. I take my tin can off the hook and go down to the milkwoman's.

Mother Denis is a hale countrywoman from Savoy, which she left when quite young; and, contrary to the custom of the Savoyards, she has not gone back to it again. She has neither husband nor child, notwithstanding the title they give her; but her kindness, which never sleeps, makes her worthy of the name of mother.

A brave creature! Left by herself in the battle

of life, she makes good her humble place in it by working, singing, helping others, and leaving the rest to God.

At the door of the milk shop I hear loud bursts of laughter. In one of the corners of the shop three children are sitting on the ground. They wear the sooty dress of Savoyard boys and in their hands they hold large slices of bread and cheese. The youngest is besmeared up to the eyes with his, and that is the reason of their mirth.

Mother Denis points them out to me.

"Look at the little lambs, how they enjoy themselves!" said she, putting her hand on the head of the little glutton.

"He has had no breakfast," puts in one of the others by way of excuse.

"Poor little thing," said the milkwoman; "he is left alone in the streets of Paris, where he can find no other father than the All-good God!"

"And that is why you make yourself a mother to them?" I replied gently.

"What I do is little enough," said Mother Denis, measuring out my milk; "but every day I get some of them together out of the street, that for once they may have enough to eat. Dear children! their mothers will make up for it in heaven. Not to mention that they recall my native mountains to me; when they sing and dance I seem to see our old father again."

Here her eyes filled with tears.

"So you are repaid by your recollections for the good you do them?" resumed I.

"Yes! yes!" said she, "and by their happiness too! The laughter of these little ones, sir, is like a bird's song; it makes you gay and gives you heart to live."

As she spoke she cut some fresh slices of bread and cheese and added some apples and a handful of nuts to them.

"Come, my little dears," she cried, "put these into your pockets against to-morrow."

Then turning to me—

"To-day I am ruining myself," added she; "but we must all have our Carnival."

I came away without saying a word: I was too much affected.

At last I have discovered what true pleasure is. After having seen the egotism of sensuality and of intellect I have found the happy self-sacrifice of goodness. Pierre, M. Antoine, and Mother Denis had each kept their Carnival; but for the two first it was only a feast for the senses or the mind; while for the third it was a feast for the heart.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT WE MAY LEARN BY LOOKING OUT OF WINDOW.

March 3d.—A poet has said that life is the dream of a shadow; he would better have compared it to a night of fever! What alternate fits of restlessness and sleep! what discomfort! what sudden starts! what ever-returning thirst! what a chaos of mournful and confused fancies! We can neither sleep nor wake; we seek in vain for repose, and we stop short on the brink of action. Two-thirds of human existence are wasted in hesitation and the last third in repenting.

When I say "human existence," I mean my own! We are so made that each of us regards himself as the mirror of the community: what passes in our minds infallibly seems to us a history of the universe. Every man is like the drunkard who reports an earthquake because he feels himself staggering.

And why am I uncertain and restless—I, a poor day-laborer in the world—who fill an obscure station in a corner of it and whose work it avails itself of without heeding the workman? I will tell you, my unseen friend, for whom these lines are written; my unknown brother, on whom the solitary call in

sorrow; my imaginary confidant, to whom all monologues are addressed and who is but the shadow of our own conscience.

A great event has happened in my life! A cross-road has suddenly opened in the middle of the monotonous way along which I was traveling quietly and without thinking of it. Two roads present themselves, and I must choose between them. One is only the continuation of that I have followed till now; the other is wider and exhibits wondrous prospects. On the first there is nothing to fear, but also little to hope; on the other great dangers and great fortune. In a word, the question is whether I shall give up the humble office in which I thought to die for one of those bold speculations in which chance alone is banker! Ever since yesterday I have consulted with myself; I have compared the two and I remain undecided.

Where shall I get any light—who will advise me?

Sunday, 4th.—See the sun coming out from the thick fogs of winter; spring announces its approach; a soft breeze skims over the roofs, and my wall-flower begins to blow again.

We are near that sweet season of fresh green, of which the poets of the sixteenth century sang with so much feeling:

> Now the gladsome month of May
> All things newly doth array;
> Fairest lady, let me too
> In thy love my life renew.

The chirping of the sparrows calls me : they claim the crumbs I scatter to them every morning. I open my window, and the prospect of roofs opens out before me in all its splendor.

He who has only lived on a first floor has no idea of the picturesque variety of such a view. He has never contemplated these tile-colored heights which intersect each other ; he has not followed with his eyes these gutter-valleys, where the fresh verdure of the attic gardens waves, the deep shadows which evening spreads over the slated slopes, and the sparkling of windows which the setting sun has kindled to a blaze of fire. He has not studied the flora of these Alps of civilization, carpeted by lichens and mosses ; he is not acquainted with the thousand inhabitants which people them, from the microscopic insect to the domestic cat—that Reynard of the roofs who is always on the prowl or in ambush ; he has not witnessed the thousand aspects of a clear or a cloudy sky ; nor the thousand effects of light, which make these upper regions a theater with ever-changing scenes ! How many times have my days of leisure passed away in contemplating this wonderful sight ; in discovering its darker or brighter episodes ; in seeking, in short, in this unknown world for the impressions of travel that wealthy tourists look for lower down !

Nine O'clock.—But why, then, have not my winged neighbors picked up the crumbs I have scattered for them before my window ? I see them fly away, come back, perch upon the ledges of the windows,

and chirp at the sight of the feast they are usually so ready to devour! It is not my presence that frightens them; I have accustomed them to eat out of my hand. Then why is this fearful suspense? In vain I look around: the roof is clear, the windows near are closed. I crumble the bread that remains from my breakfast to attract them by an ampler feast. Their chirpings increase, they bend down their heads, the boldest approach upon the wing, but without daring to alight.

Come, come, my sparrows are the victims of one of the foolish panics which make the funds fall at the Bourse! It is plain that birds are not more reasonable than men!

With this reflection I was about to shut my window, when all of a sudden I perceived, in a spot of sunshine on my right, the shadow of two pricked-up ears; then a paw advanced, then the head of a tabby-cat showed itself at the corner of the gutter. The cunning fellow was lying there in wait, hoping the crumbs would bring him some game.

And I had accused my guests of cowardice! I was so sure that no danger could menace them! I thought I had looked well everywhere! I had only forgotten the corner behind me!

In life, as on the roofs, how many misfortunes come from having forgotten a single corner!

Ten O'clock.—I cannot leave my window; the rain and the cold have kept it shut so long that I must reconnoiter all the environs to be able to take

possession of them again. My eyes search in succession all the points of the jumbled and confused prospect, passing on or stopping according to what they light upon.

Ah! see the windows upon which they formerly loved to rest; they are those of two unknown neighbors, whose different habits they have long remarked.

One is a poor workwoman, who rises before sunrise, and whose profile is shadowed upon her little muslin window curtain far into the evening; the other is a young lady singer, whose vocal flourishes sometimes reach my attic by snatches. When their windows are open, that of the workwoman discovers a humble but decent abode; the other, an elegantly furnished room. But to-day a crowd of tradespeople throng the latter; they take down the silk hangings and carry off the furniture, and I now remember that the young singer passed under my window this morning with her veil down, and walking with the hasty step of one who suffers some inward trouble. Ah! I guess it all. Her means are exhausted in elegant fancies, or have been taken away by some unexpected misfortune, and now she has fallen from luxury to indigence. While the workwoman manages not only to keep her little room, but also to furnish it with decent comfort by her steady toil, that of the singer is become the property of brokers. The one sparkled for a moment on the wave of prosperity; the other sails slowly but safely along the coast of a humble and laborious industry.

Alas! is there not here a lesson for us all? Is it really in hazardous experiments, at the end of which we shall meet with wealth or ruin, that the wise man should employ his years of strength and freedom? Ought he to consider life as a regular employment which brings its daily wages, or as a game in which the future is determined by a few throws? Why seek the risk of extreme chances? For what end hasten to riches by dangerous roads? Is it really certain that happiness is the prize of brilliant successes, rather than of a wisely accepted poverty? Ah! if men but knew in what a small dwelling joy can live, and how little it costs to furnish it!

Twelve O'clock.—I have been walking up and down my attic for a long time, with my arms folded and my eyes on the ground! My doubts increase, like shadows encroaching more and more on some bright space; my fears multiply; and the uncertainty becomes every moment more painful to me! It is necessary for me to decide to-day, and before the evening! I hold the dice of my future fate in my hands, and I dare not throw them.

Three O'clock.—The sky has become cloudy, and a cold wind begins to blow from the west; all the windows which were opened to the sunshine of a beautiful day are shut again. Only on the opposite side of the street the lodger on the last story has not yet left his balcony.

One knows him to be a soldier by his regular walk, his gray mustaches, and the ribbon which decorates his button-hole. Indeed, one might have

guessed as much from the care he takes of the little garden which is the ornament of his balcony in mid-air; for there are two things especially loved by all old soldiers—flowers and children. They have been so long obliged to look upon the earth as a field of battle, and so long cut off from the peaceful pleasures of a quiet lot, that they seem to begin life at an age when others end it. The tastes of their early years, which were arrested by the stern duties of war, suddenly break out again with their white hairs, and are like the savings of youth which they spend again in old age. Besides, they have been condemned to be destroyers for so long that perhaps they feel a secret pleasure in creating and seeing life spring up again: the beauty of weakness has a grace and an attraction the more for those who have been the agents of unbending force; and the watching over the frail germs of life has all the charms of novelty for these old workmen of death.

Therefore the cold wind has not driven my neighbor from his balcony. He is digging up the earth in his green boxes and carefully sowing in the seeds of the scarlet nasturtium, convolvulus, and sweet pea. Henceforth he will come every day to watch for their first sprouting, to protect the young shoots from weeds or insects, to arrange the strings for the tendrils to climb by, and carefully to regulate their supply of water and heat!

How much labor to bring in the desired harvest! For that how many times shall I see him brave cold or heat, wind or sun, as he does to-day! But then,

in the hot summer days, when the blinding dust whirls in clouds through our streets, when the eye, dazzled by the glare of white stucco, knows not where to rest, and the glowing roofs reflect their heat upon us to burning, the old soldier will sit in his arbor and perceive nothing but green leaves and flowers around him, and the breeze will come cool and fresh to him through these perfumed shades. His assiduous care will be rewarded at last.

We must sow the seeds and tend the growth if we would enjoy the flower.

Four O'clock.—The clouds which have been gathering in the horizon for a long time are becoming darker; it thunders loudly and the rain pours down! Those who are caught in it fly in every direction, some laughing and some crying.

I always find particular amusement in these helter-skelters caused by a sudden storm. It seems as if each one, when thus taken by surprise, loses the factitious character the world or habit has given him and appears in his true colors.

See, for example, that big man with deliberate step, who suddenly forgets his indifference made to order and runs like a school-boy! He is a thrifty city gentleman, who, with all his fashionable airs, is afraid to spoil his hat.

That pretty lady yonder, on the contrary, whose looks are so modest and whose dress is so elaborate, slackens her pace with the increasing storm. She seems to find pleasure in braving it, and does not think of her velvet cloak spotted by the hail! She is evidently a lioness in sheep's clothing.

Here, a young man who was passing stops to catch some of the hailstones in his hand, and examines them. By his quick and business-like walk just now you would have taken him for a tax-gatherer on his rounds, when he is a young philosopher, studying the effects of electricity. And those school-boys who leave their ranks to run after the sudden gusts of a March whirlwind; those girls, just now so demure, and who now fly with bursts of laughter; those national guards, who quit the martial attitude of their days of duty to take refuge under a porch! The storm has caused all these transformations.

See, it increases! The hardiest are obliged to seek shelter. I see every one rushing toward the shop in front of my window, which a bill announces is to let. It is for the fourth time within a few months. A year ago all the skill of the joiner and the art of the painter were employed in beautifying it, but their works are already destroyed by the leaving of so many tenants; the cornices of the front are disfigured by mud; the arabesques on the doorway are spoiled by bills posted upon them to announce the sale of the effects. The splendid shop has lost some of its embellishments with each change of the tenant. See it now empty and left open to the passers-by. How much does its fate resemble that of so many who, like it, only change their occupation to hasten the faster to ruin!

I am struck by this last reflection: since the morning everything seems to speak to me, and with

the same warning tone. Everything says: "Take care! be content with your happy, though humble, lot; happiness can only be retained by constancy; do not forsake your old patrons for the protection of those who are unknown!"

Are they the outward objects which speak thus, or does the warning come from within? Is it not I myself who give this language to all that surrounds me? The world is but an instrument, to which we give sound at will. But what does it signify if it teaches us wisdom? The low voice which speaks in our breasts is always a friendly voice, for it tells us what we are, that is to say, what is our capability. Bad conduct results, for the most part, from mistaking our calling. There are so many fools and knaves, because there are so few men who know themselves. The question is not to discover what will suit us, but for what we are suited!

What should I do in the midst of these experienced financial speculators? I am a poor sparrow, born among the housetops, and should always fear the enemy crouching in the dark corner; I am a prudent workman, and should think of the business of my neighbors who so suddenly disappeared: I am a timid observer, and should call to mind the flowers so slowly raised by the old soldier, or the shop brought to ruin by constant change of masters. Away from me, ye banquets, over which hangs the sword of Damocles! I am a country mouse. Give me my nuts and hollow tree, and I ask nothing besides—except security.

And why this insatiable craving for riches? Does a man drink more when he drinks from a large glass? From whence comes that universal dread of mediocrity, the fruitful mother of peace and liberty? Ah! there is the evil which, above every other, it should be the aim of both public and private education to anticipate! If that were got rid of, what treasons would be spared, what baseness avoided, what a chain of excess and crime would be forever broken! We award the palm to charity and to self-sacrifice; but, above all, let us award it to moderation, for it is the great social virtue. Even when it does not create the others, it stands instead of them.

Six O'clock.—I have written a letter of thanks to the promoters of the new speculation and have declined their offer. This decision has restored my peace of mind. I stopped singing, like the cobbler, as long as I entertained the hope of riches: it is gone, and happiness is come back!

O beloved and gentle Poverty! pardon me for having for a moment wished to fly from thee as I would from Want. Stay here forever with thy charming sisters, Pity, Patience, Sobriety, and Solitude; be ye my queens and my instructors; teach me the stern duties of life; remove far from my abode the weakness of heart and giddiness of head which follow prosperity. Holy Poverty! teach me to endure without complaining, to impart without grudging, to seek the end of life higher than in pleasure, further off than in power. Thou

givest the body strength, thou makest the mind more firm; and, thanks to thee, this life, to which the rich attach themselves as to a rock, becomes a bark of which death may cut the cable without awakening all our fears. Continue to sustain me, O thou whom Christ hath called "Blessed."

CHAPTER IV.

LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

April 9th.—The fine evenings are come back; the trees begin to put forth their shoots; hyacinths, jonquils, violets, and lilacs perfume the baskets of the flower-girls; all the world have begun their walks again on the quays and boulevards. After dinner I, too, descend from my attic to breathe the evening air.

It is the hour when Paris is seen in all its beauty. During the day the plaster fronts of the houses weary the eye by their monotonous whiteness; heavily laden carts make the streets shake under their huge wheels; the eager crowd, taken up by the one fear of losing a moment from business, cross and jostle one another; the aspect of the city altogether has something harsh, restless, and flurried about it. But as soon as the stars appear everything is changed; the glare of the white houses is quenched in the gathering shades; you hear no more any rolling but that of the carriages on their way to some party of pleasure; you see only the lounger or the light-hearted passing by; work has given place to leisure. Now each one may breathe after the fierce race through the business of the

day, and whatever strength remains to him he gives to pleasure! See the ball-rooms lighted up, the theaters open, the eating-shops along the walks set out with dainties, and the twinkling lanterns of the newspaper criers. Decidedly Paris has laid aside the pen, the ruler, and the apron; after the day spent in work, it must have the evening for enjoyment; like the masters of Thebes, it has put off all serious matter till to-morrow.

I love to take part in this happy hour; not to mix in the general gayety, but to contemplate it. If the enjoyments of others imbitter jealous minds, they strengthen the humble spirit; they are the beams of sunshine which open the two beautiful flowers called "trust" and "hope."

Although alone in the midst of the smiling multitude, I do not feel myself isolated from it, for its gayety is reflected upon me: it is my own kind, my own family, who are enjoying life, and I take a brother's share in their happiness. We are all fellow-soldiers in this earthly battle, and what does it matter on whom the honors of the victory fall? If Fortune passes by without seeing us and pours her favors on others, let us console ourselves, like the friend of Parmenio, by saying, "Those, too, are Alexanders."

While making these reflections, I was going on as chance took me. I crossed from one pavement to another, I retraced my steps, I stopped before the shops or to read the hand-bills. How many things there are to learn in the streets of Paris! What a

museum it is! Unknown fruits, foreign arms, furniture of old times or other lands, animals of all climates, statues of great men, costumes of distant nations! It is the world seen in samples!

Let us then look at this people, whose knowledge is gained from the shop windows and the tradesman's display of goods. Nothing has been taught them, but they have a rude notion of everything. They have seen the ananas at Chevet's, a palm tree in the Jardin des Plantes, sugar-canes selling on the Pont-Neuf. The redskins exhibited in the Valentine Hall have taught them to mimic the dance of the bison and to smoke the calumet of peace; they have seen Carter's lions fed; they know the principal national costumes contained in Babin's collection; Goupil's display of prints has placed the tiger-hunts of Africa and the sittings of the English Parliament before their eyes; they have become acquainted with Queen Victoria, the Emperor of Austria, and Kossuth, at the office-door of the *Illustrated News*. We can certainly instruct them, but not astonish them; for nothing is completely new to them. You may take the Paris ragamuffin through the five quarters of the world, and at every wonder with which you think to surprise him, he will settle the matter with that favorite and conclusive answer of his class—"I know."

But this variety of exhibitions, which makes Paris the fair of the world, does not merely offer a means of instruction to him who walks through it; it is a continual spur for rousing the imagination, a

first step of the ladder always set up before us in a vision. When we see them, how many voyages do we take in imagination, what adventures do we dream of, what pictures do we sketch! I never look at that shop near the Chinese baths, with its tapestry hangings of Florida jessamine and filled with magnolias, without seeing the forest glades of the New World, described by the author of "Atala," opening themselves out before me.

Then, when this study of things and this discourse of reason begin to tire you, look around you! What contrasts of figures and faces you see in the crowd! What a vast field for the exercise of meditation! A half-seen glance, or a few words caught as the speaker passes by, open a thousand vistas to your imagination. You wish to comprehend what these imperfect disclosures mean, and, as the antiquary endeavors to decipher the mutilated inscription on some old monument, you build up a history on a gesture or on a word! These are the stirring sports of the mind which finds in fiction a relief from the wearisome dullness of the actual.

Alas! as I was just now passing by the carriage entrance of a great house, I noticed a sad subject for one of these histories. A man was sitting in the darkest corner with his head bare, and holding out his hat for the charity of those who passed. His threadbare coat had that look of neatness which marks that destitution has been met by a long struggle. He had carefully buttoned it up to hide the want of a shirt. His face was half-hid under his

long gray hair, and his eyes closed, as if he wished to escape the sight of his own humiliation, and he remained mute and motionless. Those who passed him took no notice of the beggar, who sat in silence and darkness! They had been so lucky as to escape complaints and importunities, and were glad to turn away their eyes too.

All at once the great gate turned on its hinges; and a very low carriage, lighted with silver lamps and drawn by two black horses, came slowly out and took the road toward the Faubourg St. Germain. I could just distinguish, within, the sparkling diamonds and the flowers of a ball-dress; the glare of the lamps passed like a bloody streak over the pale face of the beggar, and showed his look as his eyes opened and followed the rich man's equipage until it disappeared in the night.

I dropped a small piece of money into the hat he was holding out and passed on quickly.

I had just fallen unexpectedly upon the two saddest secrets of the disease which troubles the age we live in: the envious hatred of him who suffers want, and the selfish forgetfulness of him who lives in affluence.

All the enjoyment of my walk was gone; I left off looking about me and retired into my own heart. The animated and moving sight in the streets gave place to inward meditation upon all the painful problems which have been written for the last four thousand years at the bottom of each human struggle, but which are propounded more clearly than ever in our days.

I pondered on the uselessness of so many contests in which defeat and victory only displace each other by turns, and on the mistaken zealots who have repeated from generation to generation the bloody history of Cain and Abel; and, saddened with these mournful reflections, I walked on as chance took me, until the silence all around insensibly drew me out from my own thoughts.

I had reached one of the remote streets, in which those who would live in comfort and without ostentation, and who love serious reflection, delight to find a home. There were no shops along the dimly lit pavement; one heard no sounds but of the distant carriages and of the steps of some of the inhabitants returning quietly home.

I instantly recognized the street, though I had only been there once before.

That was two years ago. I was walking at the time by the side of the Seine, to which the lights on the quays and bridges gave the aspect of a lake surrounded by a garland of stars; and I had reached the Louvre, when I was stopped by a crowd collected near the parapet; they had gathered round a child of about six, who was crying, and I asked the cause of his tears.

"It seems that he was sent to walk in the Tuileries," said a mason, who was returning from his work with his trowel in his hand; "the servant who took care of him met with some friends there, and told the child to wait for him while he went to get a drink; but I suppose the drink made him

more thirsty, for he has not come back, and the child cannot find his way home."

"Why do they not ask him his name and where he lives?"

"They have been doing it for the last hour; but all he can say is that he is called Charles and that his father is M. Duval—there are twelve hundred Duvals in Paris."

"Then he does not know in what part of the town he lives?"

"I should think not, indeed! Don't you see that he is a gentleman's child? He has never gone out except in a carriage or with a servant; he does not know what to do by himself."

Here the mason was interrupted by some of the voices rising above the others.

"We cannot leave him in the street," said some.

"The child-stealers would carry him off," continued others.

"We must take him to the overseer."

"Or to the police-office."

"That's the thing. Come, little one!"

But the child, frightened by these suggestions of danger and at the names of police and overseer, cried louder and drew back toward the parapet. In vain they tried to persuade him; his fears made him resist the more, and the most eager began to get weary, when the voice of a little boy was heard through the confusion.

"I know him well—I do," said he, looking at the lost child; "he belongs to our part of the town."

"What part is it?"

"Yonder, on the other side of the Boulevards—Rue des Magasins."

"And you have seen him before?"

"Yes, yes! he belongs to the great house at the end of the street, where there is an iron gate with gilt points."

The child quickly raised his head and stopped crying. The little boy answered all the questions that were put to him, and gave such details as left no room for doubt. The other child understood him, for he went up to him as if to put himself under his protection.

"Then you can take him to his parents?" asked the mason, who had listened with real interest to the little boy's account.

"I don't care if I do," replied he; "it's the way I'm going."

"Then you will take charge of him?"

"He has only to come with me."

And, taking up the basket he had put down on the pavement, he set off toward the postern gate of the Louvre.

The lost child followed him.

"I hope he will take him right," said I when I saw them go away.

"Never fear," replied the mason; "the little one in the blouse is the same age as the other; but, as the saying is, 'he knows black from white;' poverty, you see, is a famous schoolmistress!"

The crowd dispersed. For my part, I went to-

ward the Louvre: the thought came into my head to follow the two children, so as to guard against any mistake.

I was not long in overtaking them; they were walking side by side, talking, and already quite familiar with one another. The contrast in their dress then struck me. Little Duval wore one of those fanciful children's dresses which are expensive as well as in good taste; his coat was skillfully fitted to his figure, his trousers came down in plaits from his waist to his boots of polished leather with mother-of-pearl buttons, and his ringlets were half hid by a velvet cap. The appearance of his guide, on the contrary, was that of the class who dwell on the extreme borders of poverty, but who there maintain their ground with no surrender. His old blouse, patched with pieces of different shades, indicated the perseverance of an industrious mother struggling against the wear and tear of time; his trousers were become too short, and showed his stockings darned over and over again; and it was evident that his shoes were not made for him.

The countenances of the two children were not less different than their dresses. That of the first was delicate and refined; his clear blue eye, his fair skin, and his smiling mouth gave him a charming look of innocence and happiness. The features of the other, on the contrary, had something rough in them; his eye was quick and lively, his complexion dark, his smile less merry than shrewd; all showed a mind sharpened by too early experience; he bold-

ly walked through the middle of the streets thronged by carriages, and followed their countless turnings without hesitation.

I found, on asking him, that every day he carried dinner to his father, who was then working on the left bank of the Seine, and this responsible duty had made him careful and prudent. He had learned those hard but forcible lessons of necessity which nothing can equal or supply the place of. Unfortunately the wants of his poor family had kept him from school, and he seemed to feel the loss, for he often stopped before the print shops and asked his companion to read him the names of the engravings. In this way we reached the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle, which the little wanderer seemed to know again; notwithstanding his fatigue, he hurried on; he was agitated by mixed feelings; at the sight of his house he uttered a cry and ran toward the iron gate with the gilt points; a lady who was standing at the entrance received him in her arms, and from the exclamations of joy and the sound of kisses I soon perceived she was his mother.

Not seeing either the servant or the child return, she had sent in search of them in every direction and was waiting for them in intense anxiety.

I explained to her in a few words what had happened. She thanked me warmly, and looked round for the little boy who had recognized and brought back her son, but while we were talking he had disappeared.

It was for the first time since then that I had

come into this part of Paris. Did the mother continue grateful? Had the children met again, and had the happy chance of their first meeting lowered between them that barrier which may mark the different ranks of men, but should not divide them?

While putting these questions to myself, I slackened my pace and fixed my eyes on the great gate, which I just perceived. All at once I saw it open and two children appeared at the entrance. Although much grown, I recognized them at first sight; they were the child who was found near the parapet of the Louvre and his young guide. But the dress of the latter was greatly changed: his blouse of gray cloth was neat and even spruce, and was fastened round the waist by a polished leather belt; he wore strong shoes, but made to his feet, and had on a new cloth cap.

Just at the moment I saw him he held in his two hands an enormous bunch of lilacs, to which his companion was trying to add narcissuses and primroses; the two children laughed and parted with a friendly good-by. M. Duval's son did not go in till he had seen the other turn the corner of the street.

Then I accosted the latter and reminded him of our former meeting. He looked at me for a moment and then seemed to recollect me.

"Forgive me if I do not make you a bow," said he merrily, "but I want both my hands for the nosegay M. Charles has given me."

"You are, then, become great friends?" said I.

"Oh! I should think so," said the child; "and now my father is rich too!"

"How's that?"

"M. Duval lent him a little money; he has taken a shop, where he works on his own account; and as for me, I go to school."

"Yes," replied I, remarking for the first time the cross which decorated his little coat; "and I see that you are head boy!"

"M. Charles helps me to learn, and so I am come to be the first in the class."

"Are you now going to your lessons?"

"Yes, and he has given me some lilacs, for he has a garden where we play together and where my mother can always have flowers."

"Then it is the same as if it were partly your own."

"So it is! Ah! they are good neighbors indeed! But here I am; good-by, sir."

He nodded to me with a smile and disappeared.

I went on with my walk, still pensive, but with a feeling of relief. If I had elsewhere witnessed the painful contrast between affluence and want, here I had found the true union of riches and poverty. Hearty good-will had smoothed down the more rugged inequalities on both sides, and had opened a road of true neighborhood and fellowship between the humble workshop and the stately mansion. Instead of hearkening to the voice of interest they had both listened to that of self-sacrifice, and there was no place left for contempt or envy. Thus, instead of

the beggar in rags that I had seen at the other door cursing the rich man, I had found here the happy child of the laborer loaded with flowers and blessing him! The problem, so difficult and so dangerous to examine into with no regard but for the rights of it, I had just seen solved by love.

CHAPTER V.

COMPENSATION.

Sunday, May 27th.—Capital cities have one thing peculiar to them: their days of rest seem to be the signal for a general dispersion and flight. Like birds that are just restored to liberty, the people come out of their stone cages and joyfully fly toward the country. It is who shall find a green hillock for a seat or the shade of a wood for a shelter; they gather May flowers, they run about the fields; the town is forgotten until the evening, when they return with sprigs of blooming hawthorn in their hats, and their hearts gladdened by pleasant thoughts and recollections of the past day; the next day they return again to their harness and to work.

These rural adventures are most remarkable at Paris. When the fine weather comes, clerks, shopkeepers, and workingmen look forward impatiently for the Sunday as the day for trying a few hours of this pastoral life; they walk through six miles of grocers' shops and public-houses in the faubourgs in the sole hope of finding a real turnip-field. The father of a family begins the practical education of his son by showing him wheat which has not taken

the form of a loaf and cabbage "in its wild state." Heaven only knows the encounters, the discoveries, the adventures that are met with! What Parisian has not had his Odyssey in an excursion through the suburbs, and would not be able to write a companion to the famous "Travels by Land and by Sea from Paris to St. Cloud?"

We do not now speak of that floating population from all parts, for whom our French Babylon is the caravansary of Europe: a phalanx of thinkers, artists, men of business, and travelers, who, like Homer's hero, have arrived in their intellectual country after having seen "many peoples and cities;" but of the settled Parisian, who keeps his appointed place and lives on his own floor like the oyster on his rock, a curious vestige of the credulity, the slowness, and the simplicity of bygone ages.

For one of the singularities of Paris is that it unites twenty populations completely different in character and manners. By the side of the gypsies of commerce and of art, who wander through all the several stages of fortune or fancy, live a quiet race of people with an independence, or with regular work, whose existence resembles the dial of a clock, on which the same hand points by turns to the same hours. If no other city can show more brilliant and more stirring forms of life, no other contains more obscure and more tranquil ones. Great cities are like the sea: storms only agitate the surface; if you go to the bottom, you find a region inaccessible to the tumult and the noise.

For my part, I have settled on the verge of this region, but do not actually live in it. I am removed from the turmoil of the world and live in the shelter of solitude, but without being able to disconnect my thoughts from the struggle going on. I follow at a distance all its events of happiness or grief; I join the feasts and the funerals; for how can he who looks on and knows what passes do other than take part? Ignorance alone can keep us strangers to the life around us: selfishness itself will not suffice for that.

These reflections I made to myself in my attic, in the intervals of the various "household works" to which a bachelor is forced when he has no other servant than his own ready will. While I was pursuing my deductions I had blacked my boots, brushed my coat, and tied my cravat: I had at last arrived at the important moment when we pronounce complacently that all is finished, and that well.

A grand resolve had just decided me to depart from my usual habits. The evening before I had seen by the advertisements that the next day was a holiday at Sèvres, and that the china manufactory would be open to the public. I was tempted by the beauty of the morning and suddenly decided to go there.

On my arrival at the station on the left bank I noticed the crowd hurrying on in the fear of being late. Railroads, besides many other advantages, will have that of teaching the French punctuality. They will submit to the clock when they are con-

vinced that it is their master; they will learn to wait when they find they will not be waited for. Social virtues are in a great degree good habits. How many great qualities are grafted into nations by their geographical position, by political necessity, and by institutions! Avarice was destroyed for a time among the Lacedæmonians by the creation of an iron coinage too heavy and too bulky to be conveniently hoarded.

I found myself in a carriage with two middle-aged sisters belong to the domestic and retired class of Parisians I have spoken of above. A few civilities were sufficient to gain me their confidence, and after some minutes I was acquainted with their whole history.

They were two poor women, left orphans at fifteen, and had lived ever since, as those who work for their livelihood must live, by economy and privation. For the last twenty or thirty years they had worked in jewelry in the same house; they had seen ten masters succeed one another and make their fortunes in it, without any change in their own lot. They had always lived in the same room, at the end of one of the passages in the Rue St. Denis, where the air and the sun are unknown. They began their work before daylight, went on with it till after nightfall, and saw year succeed to year without their lives being marked by any other events than the Sunday service, a walk, or an illness.

The younger of these worthy workwomen was

forty, and obeyed her sister as she did when a child. The elder looked after her, took care of her, and scolded her with a mother's tenderness. At first it was amusing; afterward one could not help seeing something affecting in these two gray-haired children, one unable to leave off the habit of obeying, the other that of protecting.

And it was not in that alone that my two companions seemed younger than their years; they knew so little that their wonder never ceased. We had hardly arrived at Clamart before they involuntarily exclaimed, like the king in the children's game, that "they did not think the world was so great!"

It was the first time they had trusted themselves on a railroad, and it was amusing to see their sudden shocks, their alarms, and their courageous determinations: everything was a marvel to them! They had remains of youth within them, which made them sensible to things which usually only strike us in childhood. Poor creatures! they had still the feelings of another age, though they had lost its charms.

But was there not something holy in this simplicity, which had been preserved to them by abstinence from all the joys of life? Ah! accursed be he who first had the bad courage to attach ridicule to that name of Old Maid, which recalls so many images of grievous deception, of dreariness, and of abandonment! Accursed be he who can find a subject for sarcasm in involuntary misfortune and who can crown gray hairs with thorns!

The two sisters were called Frances and Madeleine. This day's journey was a feat of courage without example in their lives. The fever of the times had infected them unawares. Yesterday Madeleine had suddenly proposed the idea of the expedition, and Frances had accepted it immediately. Perhaps it would have been better not to have yielded to the temptation offered by her young sister; but "we have our follies at all ages," as the prudent Frances philosophically remarked. As for Madeleine, there are no regrets or doubts for her; she is the life-guardsman of the establishment.

"We really must amuse ourselves," said she; "we do but live once."

And the elder sister smiled at this Epicurean maxim. It was evident that the fever of independence was at its crisis in both of them.

And in truth it would have been a great pity if any scruple had interfered with their happiness, it was so frank and genial! The sight of the trees, which seemed to fly on both sides of the road, caused them unceasing admiration. The meeting a train passing in the contrary direction, with the noise and rapidity of a thunderbolt, made them shut their eyes and utter a cry; but it had already disappeared! They look round, take courage again, and express themselves full of astonishment at the marvel.

Madeleine declares that such a sight is worth the expense of the journey, and Frances would have agreed with her if she had not recollected, with

some little alarm, the deficit which such an expense must make in their budget. The 3 francs spent upon this single expedition were the savings of a whole week of work. Thus the joy of the elder of the two sisters was mixed with remorse; the prodigal child now and then turned back its eyes toward the back street of St. Denis.

But the motion and the succession of objects distract her. See the bridge of the Val surrounded by its lovely landscape: on the right, Paris with its grand monuments, which rise through the fog or sparkle in the sun; on the left, Meudon, with its villas, its woods, its vines, and its royal castle! The two workwomen look from one window to the other with exclamations of delight. One fellow-passenger laughs at their childish wonder; but to myself it is very touching, for I see in it the sign of a long and monotonous seclusion: they are the prisoners of work who have recovered liberty and fresh air for a few hours.

At last the train stops and we get out. I show the two sisters the path that leads to Sèvres, between the railway and the gardens, and they go on before, while I inquire about the time of returning.

I soon join them again at the next station, where they have stopped at the little garden belonging to the gatekeeper; both are already in deep conversation with him while he digs his garden borders and marks out the places for flower-seeds. He informs them that it is the time for hoeing out weeds, for making grafts and layers, for sowing annuals,

and for destroying the insects on the rose-trees. Madeleine has on the sill of her window two wooden boxes in which, for want of air and sun, she has never been able to make anything grow but mustard and cress;' but she persuades herself that, thanks to this information, all other plants may henceforth thrive in them. At last the gatekeeper, who is sowing a border with mignonette, gives her the rest of the seeds which he does not want, and the old maid goes off delighted and begins to act over again the dream of Perette and her can of milk with these flowers of her imagination.

On reaching the grove of acacias, where the fair was going on, I lost sight of the two sisters. I went alone among the sights: there were lotteries going on, mountebank shows, places for eating and drinking, and for shooting with the cross-bow. I have always been struck by the spirit of these out-of-door festivities. In drawing-room entertainments people are cold, grave, often listless, and most of those who go there are brought together by habit or the obligations of society; in the country assemblies, on the contrary, you only find those who are attracted by the hope of enjoyment. There, it is a forced conscription; here, they are volunteers for gayety! Then, how easily they are pleased! How far this crowd of people is yet from knowing that to be pleased with nothing and to look down on everything is the height of fashion and good taste! Doubtless their amusements are often coarse; elegance and refinement are wanting in them; but at

least they have heartiness. Oh that the hearty enjoyments of these merry-makings could be retained in union with less vulgar feeling! Formerly religion stamped its holy character on the celebration of country festivals and purified the pleasures without depriving them of their simplicity.

The hour arrives at which the doors of the porcelain manufactory and the museum of pottery are open to the public. I meet Frances and Madeleine again in the first room. Frightened at finding themselves in the midst of such regal magnificence, they hardly dare walk; they speak in a low tone, as if they were in a church.

"We are in the king's house," said the eldest sister, forgetting that there is no longer a king in France.

I encourage them to go on; I walk first and they make up their minds to follow me.

What wonders are brought together in this collection! Here we see clay molded into every shape, tinted with every color, and combined with every sort of substance!

Earth and wood are the first substances worked upon by man, and seem more particularly meant for his use. They, like the domestic animals, are the essential accessories of his life; therefore there must be a more intimate connection between them and us. Stone and metals require long preparations; they resist our first efforts, and belong less to the individual than to communities. Earth and wood are, on the contrary, the principal instruments

of the isolated being who must feed and shelter himself.

This, doubtless, makes me feel so much interested in the collection I am examining. These cups, so roughly modeled by the savage, admit me to a knowledge of some of his habits; these elegant yet incorrectly formed vases of the Indian tell me of a declining intelligence, in which still glimmers the twilight of what was once bright sunshine; these jars, loaded with arabesques, show the fancy of the Arab rudely and ignorantly copied by the Spaniard! We find here the stamp of every race, every country, and every age.

My companions seemed little interested in these historical associations; they looked at all with that credulous admiration which leaves no room for examination or discussion. Madeleine read the name written under every piece of workmanship, and her sister answered with an exclamation of wonder.

In this way we reached a little court-yard, where they had thrown away the fragments of some broken china. Frances perceived a colored saucer almost whole, of which she took possession as a record of the visit she was making; henceforth she would have a specimen of the Sèvres china, "which is only made for kings!" I would not undeceive her by telling her that the products of the manufactory are sold all over the world, and that her saucer, before it was cracked, was the same as those that are bought at the shops for sixpence! Why

should I destroy the illusions of her humble existence? Are we to break down the hedge-flowers which perfume our paths? Things are oftenest nothing in themselves; the thoughts we attach to them alone give them value. To rectify innocent mistakes in order to recover some useless reality is to be like those learned men who will see nothing in a plant but the chemical elements of which it is composed.

On leaving the manufactory, the two sisters, who had taken possession of me with the freedom of artlessness, invited me to share the luncheon they had brought with them. I declined at first, but they insisted with so much good nature that I feared to pain them, and with some awkwardnesss gave way.

We had only to look for a convenient spot. I led them up the hill, and we found a plot of grass enameled with daisies and shaded by two walnut-trees.

Madeleine could not contain herself for joy. All her life she had dreamed of a dinner out on the grass! While helping her sister to take the provisions from the basket, she tells me of all her expeditions into the country that had been planned and put off. Frances, on the other hand, was brought up at Montmorency, and before she became an orphan she had often gone back to her nurse's house. That which had the attraction of novelty for her sister had for her the charm of recollection. She told the vintage harvests to which her parents

had taken her; the rides on Mother Luret's donkey, that they could not make go to the right without pulling him to the left; the cherry-gathering; and the sails on the lake in the boat of the innkeeper.

These recollections have all the charm and freshness of childhood. Frances recalls to herself less what she has seen than what she has felt. While she is talking the cloth is laid, and we sit down under a tree. Before us winds the valley of Sèvres, its many-storied houses abutting upon the gardens and the slopes of the hill; on the other side spreads out the park of St. Cloud, with its magnificent clumps of trees interspersed with meadows; above stretch the heavens like an immense ocean, in which the clouds are sailing! I look at this beautiful country and I listen to these good old maids; I admire and I am interested; and time passes gently on without my perceiving it.

At last the sun sets, and we have to think of returning. While Madeleine and Frances clear away the dinner, I walk down to the manufactory to ask the hour. The merry-making is at its height; the blasts of the trombones resound from the band under the acacias. For a few moments I forget myself with looking about; but I have promised the two sisters to take them back to the Bellevue station: the train cannot wait, and I make haste to climb the path again which leads to the walnut-trees.

Just before I reached them I heard voices on the other side of the hedge. Madeleine and Frances

were speaking to a poor girl whose clothes were burned, her hands blackened, and her face tied up with blood-stained bandages. I saw that she was one of the girls employed at the gunpowder mills, which are built higher up on the common. An explosion had taken place a few days before; the girl's mother and elder sister were killed; she herself escaped by a miracle and was now left without any means of support. She told all this with the resigned and unhopeful manner of one who has always been accustomed to suffer. The two sisters were much affected; I saw them consulting with one another in a low tone: then Frances took 30 sous out of a little coarse silk purse, which was all they had left, and gave them to the poor girl. I hastened on to that side of the hedge; but before I reached it I met the two old sisters, who called out to me that they would not return by the railway, but on foot!

I then understood that the money they had meant for the journey had just been given to the beggar! Good, like evil, is contagious: I run to the poor wounded girl, give her the sum that was to pay for my own place, and return to Frances and Madeleine and tell them I will walk with them.

. . . . . .

I am just come back from taking them home, and have left them delighted with their day, the recollection of which will long make them happy.

This morning I was pitying those whose lives are

obscure and joyless; now, I understand that God has provided a compensation with every trial. The smallest pleasure derives from rarity a relish otherwise unknown. Enjoyment is only what we feel to be such, and the luxurious man feels no longer: satiety has destroyed his appetite, while privation preserves to the other that first of earthly blessings, the being easily made happy. Oh that I could persuade every one of this! that so the rich might not abuse their riches and that the poor might have patience. If happiness is the rarest of blessings, it is because the reception of it is the rarest of virtues.

Madeleine and Frances! ye poor old maids whose courage, resignation, and generous hearts are your only wealth, pray for the wretched who give themselves up to despair; for the unhappy who hate and envy; and for the unfeeling into whose enjoyments no pity enters.

CHAPTER VI.

UNCLE MAURICE.

June 7th, Four O'clock A.M.—I am not surprised at hearing, when I awake, the birds singing so joyfully outside my window; it is only by living, as they and I do, in a top story, that one comes to know how cheerful the mornings really are up among the roofs. It is there that the sun sends his first rays and the breeze comes with the fragrance of the gardens and woods; there that a wandering butterfly sometimes ventures among the flowers of the attic and that the songs of the industrious workwoman welcome the dawn of day. The lower stories are still deep in sleep, silence, and shadow, while here labor, light, and song already reign.

What life is around me! See the swallow returning from her search for food, with her beak full of insects for her young ones; the sparrows shake the dew from their wings while they chase one another in the sunshine; and my neighbors throw open their windows and welcome the morning with their fresh faces! Delightful hour of waking, when everything returns to feeling and to motion; when the first light of day strikes upon creation and brings it to life again, as the magic wand struck the palace of

the Sleeping Beauty in the wood! It is a moment of rest from every misery; the sufferings of the sick are allayed, and a breath of hope enters into the hearts of the despairing. But, alas! it is but a short respite! Everything will soon resume its wonted course: the great human machine, with its long strains, its deep gasps, its collisions, and its crashes, will be again put in motion.

The tranquillity of this first morning hour reminds me of that of our first years of life. Then, too, the sun shines brightly, the air is fragrant, and the illusions of youth—those birds of our life's morning—sing around us. Why do they fly away when we are older? Where do this sadness and this solitude, which gradually steal upon us, come from? The course seems to be the same with individuals and with communities: at starting, so readily made happy, so easily enchanted; and at the goal, the bitter disappointment of reality! The road, which began among hawthorns and primroses, ends speedily in deserts or in precipices! Why is there so much confidence at first, so much doubt at last? Has, then, the knowledge of life no other end but to make it unfit for happiness? Must we condemn ourselves to ignorance if we would preserve hope? Is the world and is the individual man intended, after all, to find rest only in an eternal childhood?

How many times have I asked myself these questions! Solitude has the advantage or the danger of making us continually search more deeply into the same ideas. As our discourse is only with ourself,

we always give the same direction to the conversation; we are not called to turn it to the subject which occupies another mind or interests another's feelings; and so an involuntary inclination makes us return forever to knock at the same doors!

I interrupted my reflections to put my attic in order. I hate the look of disorder, because it shows either a contempt for details or an inaptness for spiritual life. To arrange the things among which we have to live is to establish the relation of property and of use between them and us: it is to lay the foundation of those habits without which man tends to the savage state. What, in fact, is social organization but a series of habits, settled in accordance with the dispositions of our nature?

I distrust both the intellect and the morality of those people to whom disorder is of no consequence —who can live at ease in an Augean stable. What surrounds us reflects more or less that which is within us. The mind is like one of those dark lanterns which, in spite of everything, still throw some light around. If our tastes did not reveal our character, they would be no longer tastes, but instincts.

While I was arranging everything in my attic, my eyes rested on the little almanac hanging over my chimney-piece. I looked for the day of the month, and I saw these words written in large letters: "Fete Dieu!"

It is to-day! In this great city, where there are no longer any public religious solemnities, there is

nothing to remind us of it; but it is, in truth, the period so happily chosen by the primitive Church. "The day kept in honor of the Creator," says Chateaubriand, "happens at a time when the heaven and the earth declare his power, when the woods and fields are full of new life, and all are united by the happiest ties; there is not a single widowed plant in the fields."

What recollections these words have just awakened! I left off what I was about, I leaned my elbows on the window-sill, and, with my head between my two hands, I went back in thought to the little town where the first days of my childhood were passed.

The *Fête Dieu* was then one of the great events of my life! It was necessary to be diligent and obedient a long time beforehand to deserve to share in it. I still recollect with what raptures of expectation I got up on the morning of the day. There was a holy joy in the air. The neighbors, up earlier than usual, hung cloths with flowers or figures worked in tapestry along the streets. I went from one to another, by turns admiring religious scenes of the Middle Ages, mythological compositions of the Renaissance, old battles in the style of Louis XIV., and the Arcadias of Madame de Pompadour. All this world of phantoms seemed to be coming forth from the dust of past ages to assist—silent and motionless—at the holy ceremony. I looked, alternately in fear and wonder, at those terrible warriors with their swords always raised,

those beautiful huntresses shooting the arrow which never left the bow, and those shepherds in satin breeches always playing the flute at the feet of the perpetually smiling shepherdess. Sometimes, when the wind blew behind these hanging pictures, it seemed to me that the figures themselves moved, and I watched to see them detach themselves from the wall and take their place in the procession! But these impressions were vague and transitory. The feeling that predominated over every other was that of an overflowing yet quiet joy. In the midst of all the floating draperies, the scattered flowers, the voices of the maidens, and the gladness which, like a perfume, exhaled from everything, you felt transported in spite of yourself. The joyful sounds of the festival were repeated in your heart in a thousand melodious echoes. You were more indulgent, more holy, more loving! For God was not only manifesting himself without, but also within us.

And then the altars for the occasion! the flowery arbors! the triumphal arches made of green boughs! What competition among the different parishes for the erection of the resting-places* where the procession was to halt! It was who should contribute the rarest and the most beautiful of his possessions!

It was there I made my first sacrifice!

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*The *reposoirs*, or temporary altars, on which the consecrated elements are placed while the procession halts.

The wreaths of flowers were arranged, the candles lighted, and the tabernacle† dressed with roses; but one was wanting fit to crown the whole! All the neighboring gardens had been ransacked. I alone possessed a flower worthy of such a place. It was on the rose-tree given me by my mother on my birthday. I had watched it for several months, and there was no other bud to blow on the tree. There it was, half-open, in its mossy nest, the object of such long expectations, and of all a child's pride! I hesitated for some moments. No one had asked me for it; I might easily avoid losing it. I should hear no reproaches, but one rose noiselessly within me. When every one else had given all they had, ought I alone to keep back my treasure? Ought I to grudge to God one of the gifts which, like all the rest, I had received from him? At this last thought I plucked the flower from the stem and took it to put at the top of the tabernacle. Ah! why does the recollection of this sacrifice, which was so hard and yet so sweet to me, now make me smile? Is it so certain that the value of a gift is in itself rather than in the intention? If the cup of cold water in the Gospel is remembered to the poor man, why should not the flower be remembered to the child? Let us not look down upon the child's simple acts of generosity; it is these which accustom the soul to self-denial and to sympathy. I cherished this moss-rose a long time as a sacred talisman; I had

† An ornamental case or cabinet, which contains the bread and wine.

reason to cherish it always, as the record of the first victory won over myself.

It is now many years since I witnessed the celebration of the *Fête Dieu;* but should I again feel in it the happy sensations of former days? I still remember how, when the procession had passed, I walked through the the streets strewed with flowers and shaded with green boughs. I felt intoxicated by the lingering perfumes of the incense, mixed with the fragrance of syringas, jessamines, and roses, and I seemed no longer to touch the ground as I went along. I smiled at everything; the whole world was Paradise in my eyes, and it seemed to me that God was floating in the air!

Moreover, this feeling was not the excitement of the moment: it might be more intense on certain days, but at the same time it continued through the ordinary course of my life. Many years thus passed for me in an expansion of heart and a trustfulness which prevented sorrow, if not from coming, at least from staying with me. Sure of not being alone, I soon took heart again, like the child who recovers its courage because it hears its mother's voice close by. Why have I lost that confidence of my childhood? Shall I never feel again so deeply that God is here?

How strange the association of our thoughts! A day of the month recalls my infancy, and see, all the recollections of my former years are growing up around me! Why was I so happy then? I consider well, and nothing is sensibly changed in

my condition. I possess, as I did then, health and my daily bread; the only difference is that I am now responsible for myself! As a child, I accepted life when it came; another cared and provided for me. As long as I fulfilled my present duties I was at peace within, and I left the future to the prudence of my father! My destiny was a ship, in the direction of which I had no share and in which I sailed as a common passenger. There was the whole secret of childhood's happy security. Since then worldly wisdom has deprived me of it. When my lot was intrusted to my own and sole keeping, I thought to make myself master of it by means of a long insight into the future. I have filled the present hour with anxieties by occupying my thoughts with the future; I have put my judgment in the place of Providence, and the happy child is changed into the anxious man.

A melancholy course, yet perhaps an important lesson. Who knows that, if I had trusted more to Him who rules the world, I should not have been spared all this anxiety? It may be that happiness is not possible here below, but on the condition of living like a child, giving ourselves up to the duties of each day as it comes, and trusting in the goodness of our heavenly Father for all besides.

This reminds me of my Uncle Maurice! Whenever I have need to strengthen myself in all that is good, I turn my thoughts to him; I see again the gentle expression of his half-smiling, half-mournful face; I hear his voice, always soft and soothing

as a breath of summer! The remembrance of him protects my life and gives it light. He, too, was a saint and martyr here below. Others have pointed out the path of heaven; he has taught us to see those of earth aright.

But except the angels, who are charged with noting down the sacrifices performed in secret and the virtues which are never known, who has ever heard speak of my Uncle Maurice? Perhaps I alone remember his name and still recall his history.

Well! I will write it, not for others, but for myself! They say that at the sight of the Apollo the body erects itself and assumes a more dignified attitude: in the same way, the soul should feel itself raised and ennobled by the recollection of a good man's life!

A ray of the rising sun lights up the little table on which I write; the breeze brings me in the scent of the mignonette, and the swallows wheel about my window with joyful twitterings. The image of my Uncle Maurice will be in its proper place amid the songs, the sunshine, and the fragrance.

Seven O'clock.—It is with men's lives as with days: some dawn radiant with a thousand colors, others dark with gloomy clouds. That of my Uncle Maurice was one of the latter. He was so sickly when he came into the world that they thought he must die; but notwithstanding these anticipations, which might be called hopes, he continued to live, suffering and deformed.

He was deprived of all joys as well as of all

the attractions of childhood. He was oppressed because he was weak and laughed at for his deformity. In vain the little hunchback opened his arms to the world; the world scoffed at him and went its way.

However, he still had his mother, and it was to her that the child directed all the feelings of a heart repulsed by others. With her he found shelter and was happy till he reached the age when a man must take his place in life; and Maurice had to content himself with that which others had refused with contempt. His education would have qualified him for any course of life; and he became an octroi-clerk * in one of the little toll-houses at the entrance of his native town.

He was always shut up in this dwelling of a few feet square, with no relaxation from the office accounts but reading and his mother's visits. On fine summer days she came to work at the door of his hut, under the shade of a clematis planted by Maurice. And even when she was silent her presence was a pleasant change for the hunchback; he heard the clinking of her long knitting-needles; he saw her mild and mournful profile, which reminded him of so many courageously borne trials; he could every now and then rest his hand affectionately on that bowed-down neck and exchange a smile with her!

This comfort was soon to be taken from him. His old mother fell sick, and at the end of a few

* The *octroi* is the tax on provisions levied at the entrance of the town.

days he had to give up all hope. Maurice was overcome at the idea of a separation which would henceforth leave him alone on earth, and abandoned himself to boundless grief. He knelt by the bedside of the dying woman, he called her by the fondest names, he pressed her in his arms, as if he could so keep her in life. His mother tried to return his caresses and to answer him; but her hands were cold, her voice already gone. She could only press her lips against the forehead of her son, heave a sigh, and close her eyes forever!

They tried to take Maurice away, but he resisted them and threw himself on that now motionless form.

"Dead!" cried he; "dead! She who had never left me, she who was the only one in the world who loved me! You, my mother, dead! What, then, remains for me here below?"

A stifled voice replied:

"God!"

Maurice, startled, raised himself up! Was it a last sigh from the dead or his own conscience that had answered him? He did not seek to know, but he understood the answer, and accepted it.

It was then that I first knew him. I often went to see him in his little toll-house. He mixed in my childish games, told me his finest stories, and let me gather his flowers. Deprived as he was of all external attractiveness, he showed himself full of kindness to all who came to him, and though he never would put himself forward, he had a welcome for

every one. Deserted, despised, he submitted to everything with a gentle patience; and while he was thus stretched on the the cross of life, amid the insults of his executioners, he repeated with Christ, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

No other clerk showed so much honesty zeal and intelligence; but those who otherwise might have promoted him as his services deserved were repulsed by his deformity. As he had no patrons, he found his claims were always disregarded. They preferred before him those who were better able to make themselves agreeable, and seemed to be granting him a favor when letting him keep the humble office which enabled him to live. Uncle Maurice bore injustice as he had borne contempt; unfairly treated by men, he raised his eyes higher and trusted in the justice of Him who cannot be deceived.

He lived in an old house in the suburb, where many workpeople, as poor but not as forlorn as he, also lodged. Among these neighbors there was a single woman, who lived by herself in a little garret, into which came both wind and rain. She was a young girl, pale, silent, and with nothing to recommend her but her wretchedness and her resignation to it. She was never seen speaking to any other woman, and no song cheered her garret. She worked without interest and without relaxation; a depressing gloom seemed to envelop her like a shroud. Her dejection affected Maurice; he attempted to speak to her: she replied mildly, but in

few words. It was easy to see that she preferred her silence and her solitude to the little hunchback's good-will; he perceived it and said no more.

But Toinette's needle was hardly sufficient for her support, and presently work failed her! Maurice learned that the poor girl was in want of everything, and that the tradesmen refused to give her credit. He immediately went to them, and privately engaged to pay them for what they supplied Toinette with.

Things went on in this way for several months. The young dressmaker continued out of work, until she was at last frightened at the bills she had contracted with the shopkeepers. When she came to an explanation with them, everything was discovered. Her first impulse was to run to Uncle Maurice and thank him on her knees. Her habitual reserve had given way to a burst of deepest feeling. It seemed as if gratitude had melted all the ice of that numbed heart.

Being now no longer embarrassed with a secret, the little hunchback could give greater efficacy to his good offices. Toinette became to him a sister, for whose wants he had a right to provide. It was the first time since the death of his mother that he had been able to share his life with another. The young woman received his attentions with feeling, but with reserve. All Maurice's efforts were insufficient to dispel her gloom: she seemed touched by his kindness, and sometimes expressed her sense of it with warmth; but there she stopped. Her heart

was a closed book, which the little hunchback might bend over, but could not read. In truth he cared little to do so: he gave himself up to the happiness of being no longer alone, and took Toinette such as her long trials had made her; he loved her as she was, and wished for nothing else but still to enjoy her company.

This thought insensibly took possession of his mind, to the exclusion of all besides. The poor girl was as forlorn as himself; she had become accustomed to the deformity of the hunchback, and she seemed to look on him with an affectionate sympathy! What more could he wish for? Until then, the hopes of making himself acceptable to a helpmate had been repelled by Maurice as a dream; but chance seemed willing to make it a reality. After much hesitation he took courage and decided to speak to her.

It was evening; the little hunchback, in much agitation, directed his steps toward the workwoman's garret. Just as he was about to enter, he thought he heard a strange voice pronouncing the maiden's name. He quickly pushed open the door, and perceived Toinette weeping and leaning on the shoulder of a young man in the dress of a sailor.

At the sight of my uncle, she disengaged herself quickly and ran to him, crying out:

"Ah! come in—come in! It is he that I thought was dead: it is Julien; it is my betrothed!"

Maurice tottered and drew back. A single word had told him all!

It seemed to him as if the ground shook and his heart was going to break; but the same voice that he had heard by his mother's death-bed again sounded in his ears, and he soon recovered himself. God was still his friend!

He himself accompanied the newly married pair on the road when they went away, and after having wished them all the happiness which was denied to him, he returned with resignation to the old house in the suburb.

It was there that he ended his life, forsaken by men, but not as he said by the "Father which is in heaven." He felt his presence everywhere; it was to him in the place of all else. When he died, it was with a smile and like an exile setting out for his own country. He who had consoled him in poverty and ill-health, when he was suffering from injustice and forsaken by all, had made death a gain and blessing to him.

Eight O'clock.—All I have just written has pained me! Till now I have looked into life for instruction how to live. Is it, then, true that human maxims are not always sufficient? that beyond goodness, prudence, moderation, humility, self-sacrifice itself, there is one great truth, which alone can face great misfortunes? and that, if man had need of virtues for others, he has need of religion for himself?

When, in youth, we drink our wine with a merry heart, as the Scripture expresses it, we think we are sufficient for ourselves; strong, happy, and beloved, we believe, like Ajax, we shall be able to escape

every storm in spite of the gods. But later in life when the back is bowed, when happiness proves a fading flower, and the affections grow chill—then, in fear of the void and the darkness, we stretch out our arms, like the child overtaken by night, and we call for help to Him who is everywhere.

I was asking this morning, why this growing confusion alike for society and for the individual? In vain does human reason from hour to hour light some new torch on the roadside: the night continues to grow ever darker! Is it not because we are content to withdraw further and further from God, the Sun of spirits?

But what do these hermits' reveries signify to the world? The inward turmoils of most men are stifled by the outward ones; life does not give them time to question themselves. Have they time to know what they are, and what they should be, whose whole thoughts are in the next lease or the last price of stock? Heaven is very high, and wise men look only to the earth.

But I—poor savage amid all this civilization, who seek neither power nor riches, and who have found in my own thoughts the home and shelter of my spirit—I can go back with impunity to these recollections of my childhood; and if this our great city no longer honors the name of God with a festival, I will strive still to keep the feast to him in my heart.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRICE OF POWER AND THE WORTH OF FAME.

Sunday, July 1st.—Yesterday the month dedicated to Juno (*Junius*, June) by the Romans ended. To-day we enter on July.

In ancient Rome this latter month was called *Quintilis* (the fifth), because the year, which was then only divided into ten parts, began in March. When Numa Pompilius divided it into twelve months this name of *Quintilis* was preserved, as well as those that followed—*Sextilis*, September, October, November, December—although these designations did not accord with the newly arranged order of the months. At last, after a time the month *Quintilis*, in which Julius Cæsar was born, was called *Julius*, from whence we have July. Thus this name, placed in the calendar, is become the imperishable record of a great man ; it is an immortal epitaph on Time's highway, engraved by the admiration of man.

How many similar inscriptions are there! Seas, continents, mountains, stars, and monuments have all in succession served the same purpose! We have turned the whole world into a Golden Book, like that in which the state of Venice used to enroll

its illustrious names and its great deeds. It seems that mankind feels a necessity for honoring itself in its elect ones, and that it raises itself in its own eyes by choosing heroes from among its own race. The human family love to preserve the memory of the "*pœrvenus*" of glory, as we cherish that of a renowned ancestor or of a benefactor.

In fact, the talents granted to a single individual do not benefit himself alone, but are gifts to the world; every one shares them, for every one suffers or benefits by his actions. Genius is a lighthouse, meant to give light from afar; the man who bears it is but the rock upon which this lighthouse is built.

I love to dwell upon these thoughts; they explain to me in what consists our admiration for glory. When glory has benefited men, that admiration is gratitude: when it is only remarkable in itself, it is the pride of race; as men, we love to immortalize the most shining examples of humanity.

Who knows whether we do not obey the same instinct in submitting to the hand of power? Apart from the requirements of a gradation of ranks or the consequences of a conquest, the multitude delight to surround their chiefs with privileges—whether it be that their vanity makes them thus to aggrandize one of their own creations, or whether they try to conceal the humiliation of subjection by exaggerating the importance of those who rule them. They wish to honor themselves through their master; they elevate him on their shoulders

as on a pedestal; they surround him with a halo of light, in order that some of it may be reflected upon themselves. It is still the fable of the dog who contents himself with the chain and collar, so that they are of gold.

This servile vanity is not less natural or less common than the vanity of dominion. Whoever feels himself incapable of command, at least desires to obey a powerful chief. Serfs have been known to consider themselves dishonored when they became the property of a mere count after having been that of a prince, and Saint-Simon mentions a valet who would only wait upon marquises.

July 7th, Seven O'clock P.M.—I have just now been up the Boulevards; it was the opera night, and there was a crowd of carriages in the Rue Lepelletier. The foot-passengers who were stopped at a crossing recognized the persons in some of these as they went by and mentioned their names; they were those of celebrated or powerful men, the successful ones of the day.

Near me there was a man looking on with hollow cheeks and eager eyes, and whose black coat was threadbare. He followed with envious looks these possessors of the privileges of power or of fame, and I read on his lips, which curled with a bitter smile, all that passed in his mind.

"Look at them, the lucky fellows!" thought he; "all the pleasures of wealth, all the enjoyments of pride, are theirs. Their names are renowned, all their wishes fulfilled; they are the sovereigns of

the world either by their intellect or their power; and while I, poor and unknown, toil painfully along the road below, they wing their way over the mountain-tops gilded by the broad sunshine of prosperity."

I have come home in deep thought. Is it true that there are these inequalities, I do not say in the fortunes, but in the happiness of men? Do genius and authority really wear life as a crown, while the greater part of mankind receive it as a yoke? Is the difference of rank but a different use of men's dispositions and talents, or a real inequality in their destinies? A solemn question, as it regards the verification of God's impartiality.

July 8th, Noon.—I went this morning to call upon a friend from the same province as myself, and who is first usher in waiting to one of our ministers. I took him some letters from his family, left for him by a traveler just come from Brittany. He wished me to stay.

"To-day," said he, "the minister gives no audience: he takes a day of rest with his family. His younger sisters are arrived: he will take them this morning to St. Cloud, and in the evening he has invited his friends to a private ball. I shall be dismissed directly for the rest of the day. We can dine together; read the news while you are waiting for me."

I sat down at a table covered with newspapers, all of which I looked over by turns. Most of them contained severe criticisms on the last political acts

of the minister; some of them added suspicions as to the honor of the minister himself.

Just as I had finished reading, a secretary came for them to take them to his master.

He was then about to read these accusations, to suffer silently the abuse of all those tongues which were holding him up to indignation or to scorn! Like the Roman victor in his triumph, he had to endure the insults of him who followed his car, relating to the crowd his follies, his ignorance, or his vices.

But among the arrows shot at him from every side, would no one be found poisoned? Would not one reach some spot in his heart where the wound would be incurable? What is the worth of a life exposed to the attacks of envious hatred or furious conviction? The Christians yielded only the fragments of their flesh to the beasts of the amphitheaters; the man in power gives up his peace, his affections, his honor, to the cruel bites of the pen.

While I was musing upon these dangers of greatness, the usher entered hastily. Important news has been received: the minister is just summoned to the council; he will not be able to take his sisters to St. Cloud.

I saw, through the windows, the young ladies, who were waiting at the door, sorrowfully go upstairs again, while their brother went off to the council. The carriage, which should have gone filled with so much family happiness, is just out of sight, carrying only the cares of a statesman in it.

The usher came back discontented and disappointed.

The more or less of liberty which he is allowed to enjoy is his barometer of the political atmosphere. If he gets leave, all goes well; if he is kept at his post, the country is in danger. His opinion on public affairs is but a calculation of his own interest. My friend is almost a statesman.

I had some conversation with him, and he told me several curious particulars of public life.

The new minister has old friends, whose opinions he opposes, though he still retains his personal regard for them. Though separated from them by the colors he fights under, they remain united by old associations; but the exigencies of party forbid him to meet them. If their intercourse continued, it would awaken suspicion; people would imagine that some dishonorable bargain was going on; his friends would be held to be traitors desirous to sell themselves, and he the corrupt minister prepared to buy them. He has, therefore, been obliged to break off friendships of twenty years' standing, and to sacrifice attachments which had become a second nature.

Sometimes, however, the minister still gives way to his old feelings; he receives or visits his friends privately; he shuts himself up with them and talks of the times when they could be open friends. By dint of precautions they have hitherto succeeded in concealing this plot of friendship against policy; but sooner or later the newspapers will be informed

of it and will denounce him to the country as an object of distrust.

For whether hatred be honest or dishonest, it never shrinks from any accusation. Sometimes it even proceeds to crime. The usher assured me that several warnings had been given the minister which had made him fear the vengeance of an assassin, and that he no longer ventured out on foot.

Then, from one thing to another, I learned what temptations came in to mislead or overcome his judgment; how he found himself fatally led into obliquities which he could not but deplore. Misled by passion, over-persuaded by entreaties, or compelled for reputation's sake, he has many times held the balance with an unsteady hand. How sad the condition of him who is in authority! Not only are the miseries of power imposed upon him, but its vices, also, which, not content with torturing, succeed in corrupting him.

We prolonged our conversation till it was interrupted by the minister's return. He threw himself out of the carriage with a handful of papers, and with an anxious manner went into his own room. An instant afterward his bell was heard; his secretary was called to send off notices to all those invited for the evening; the ball would not take place; they spoke mysteriously of bad news transmitted by the telegraph, and in such circumstances an entertainment would seem to insult the public sorrow.

I took leave of my friend, and here I am at

home. What I have just seen is an answer to my doubts the other day. Now I know with what pangs men pay their dignities; I now understand

"That Fortune sells what we believe she gives."

This explains to me why Charles V. aspired to the repose of the cloister.

And yet I have only glanced at some of the sufferings attached to power. What shall I say of the falls in which its possessors are precipitated from the heights of heaven to the very depths of the earth? of that path of pain along which they must forever bear the burden of their responsibility? of that chain of decorums and *ennuis* which encompasses every act of their lives and leaves them so little liberty?

The partisans of despotism adhere with reason to forms and ceromonies. If men wish to give unlimited power to their fellow-man, they must keep him separated from ordinary humanity; they must surround him with a continual worship, and by a constant ceromonial keep up for him the superhuman part they have granted him. Our masters cannot remain absolute but on condition of being treated as idols.

But, after all, these idols are men, and if the exclusive life they must lead is an insult to the dignity of others, it is also a torment to themselves. Every one knows the law of the Spanish court, which used to regulate, hour by hour, the actions of the king and queen; "so that," says Voltaire, "by

reading it one can tell all that the sovereigns of Spain have done, or will do, from Philip II. to the day of judgment." It was by this law that Philip III., when sick, was obliged to endure such an excess of heat that he died in consequence, because the Duke of Uzeda, who alone had the right to put out the fire in the royal chamber, happened to be absent.

When the wife of Charles II. was run away with on a spirited horse she was about to perish before any one dared to save her, because etiquette forbade them to touch the queen. Two young officers endangered their lives for her by stopping the horse. The prayers and tears of her whom they had just snatched from death were necessary to obtain pardon for their crime. Every one knows the anecdote related by Madame Campan of Marie Antoinette, wife of Louis XVI. One day, being at her toilet, when the shift was about to be presented to her by one of the assistants, a lady of very ancient family entered and claimed the honor, as she had the right by etiquette; but at the moment she was going to fulfill her duty, a lady of higher rank appeared, and in her turn took the garment she was about to offer to the queen; when a third lady of still higher title came in her turn, and was followed by a fourth, who was no other than the king's sister. The shift was in this manner passed from hand to hand, with ceremonies, courtesies, and compliments, before it came to the queen, who, half-naked and quite ashamed, was shivering with cold for the great honor of etiquette.

12*th*, *Seven O'clock P.M.*—On coming home this evening I saw, standing at the door of a house, an old man whose appearance and features reminded me of my father. There was the same beautiful smile, the same deep and penetrating eye, the same noble bearing of the head, and the same careless attitude.

I began living over again the first years of my life and recalling to myself the conversations of that guide whom God hin is mercy had given me, and whom in his severity he had too soon withdrawn.

When my father spoke it was not only to bring our two minds together by an interchange of thought, but his words always contained instruction.

Not that he endeavored to make me feel it so: my father feared everything that had the appearance of a lesson. He used to say that virtue could make herself devoted friends, but she did not take pupils: therefore he was not anxious to teach goodness; he contented himself with sowing the seeds of it, certain that experience would make them grow.

How often has good grain fallen thus into a corner of the heart, and when it has been long forgotten, all at once put forth the blade and come into ear. It is a treasure laid aside in a time of ignorance, and we do not know its value till the day we find ourselves in need of it.

Among the stories with which he enlivened our

walks or our evenings there is one which now returns to my memory, doubtless because the time is come to derive its lesson from it.

My father, who was apprenticed at the age of twelve to one of those trading collectors who call themselves naturalists, because they put all creation under glasses that they may sell it by retail, had always led a life of poverty and labor. Obliged to rise before daybreak, by turns shop-boy, clerk, and laborer, he was made to bear alone all the work of a trade of which his master reaped all the profits. In truth, this latter had a peculiar talent for making the most of the labor of other people. Though unfit himself for the execution of any kind of work, no one knew better how to sell it. His words were a net, in which people found themselves taken before they were aware. And since he was devoted to himself alone and looked on the producer as his enemy and the buyer as his prey, he used them both up with that obstinate perseverance which avarice teaches.

My father was a slave all the week and could only call himself his own on Sunday. The master naturalist, who used to spend the day at the house of an old female relation, then gave him his liberty on condition that he dined out and at his own expense. But my father used secretly to take with him a crust of bread, which he hid in his botanizing box, and leaving Paris as soon as it was day, he would wander far into the valley of Montmorency, the wood of Meudon, or among the windings of the

Marne. Excited by the fresh air, the penetrating perfume of the growing vegetation, or the fragrance of the honeysuckles, he would walk on until hunger or fatigue made itself felt. Then he would sit under a hedge or by the side of a stream, and would make a rustic feast by turns on water-cresses, wood strawberries, and blackberries picked from the hedges; he would gather a few plants, read a few pages of Florian, then in greatest vogue, of Gessner, who was just translated, or of Jean Jacques, of whom he possessed three odd volumes. The day was thus passed alternately in activity and rest, in pursuit and meditation, until the declining sun warned him to take again the road to Paris, where he would arrive, his feet torn and dusty, but his mind invigorated for a whole week.

One day as he was going toward the wood of Viroflay he met close to it a stranger who was occupied in botanizing and in sorting the plants he had just gathered. He was an oldish man with an honest face; but his eyes, which were rather deep set under his eyebrows, had a somewhat uneasy and timid expression. He was dressed in a brown cloth coat, a gray waistcoat, black breeches, and worsted stockings, and held an ivory-headed cane under his arm. His appearance was that of a small retired tradesman who was living on his means, and rather below the golden mean of Horace.

My father, who had great respect for age, civilly raised his hat to him as he passed. In doing so, a plant he held fell from his hand; the stranger stooped to take it up and recognized it.

"It is a *Deutaria heptaphyllos*," said he. "I have not yet seen any of them in these woods; did you find it near here, sir?"

My father replied that it was to be found in abundance on the top of the hill, toward Sèvres, as well as the great *Laserpitium*.

"That, too!" repeated the old man more briskly. "Ah! I shall go and look for them; I have gathered them formerly on the hillside of Robaila."

My father proposed to take him. The stranger accepted his proposal with thanks, and hastened to collect together the plants he had gathered; but all of a sudden he appeared seized with a scruple. He observed to his companion that the road he was going was half-way up the hill, and led in the direction of the castle of the Dames Royales at Bellevue; that by going to the top he would consequently turn out of his road, and that it was not right he should take this trouble for a stranger.

My father insisted upon it with his habitual good nature; but the more eagerness he showed the more obstinately the old man refused; it even seemed to my father that his good intention at last excited his suspicion. He therefore contented himself with pointing out the road to the stranger, whom he saluted, and he soon lost sight of him.

Many hours passed by, and he thought no more of the meeting. He had reached the copses of Chaville, where, stretched on the ground in a mossy glade, he read once more the last volume of "Emile." The delight of reading it had so com-

pletely absorbed him that he had ceased to see or hear anything around him. With his cheeks flushed and his eyes moist, he repeated aloud a passage which had particularly affected him.

An exclamation uttered close by him awoke him from his ecstasy; he raised his head and perceived the tradesman-looking person he had met before on the cross-road at Viroflay.

He was loaded with plants, the collection of which seemed to have put him into high good humor.

"A thousand thanks, sir," said he to my father. "I have found all that you told me of, and I am indebted to you for a charming walk."

My father respectfully rose and made a civil reply. The stranger had grown quite familiar, and even asked if his young brother botanist did not think of returning to Paris. My father replied in the affirmative, and opened his tin box to put his book back in it.

The stranger asked him with a smile if he might without impertinence ask the name of it. My father answered that it was Rousseau's "Emile."

The stranger immediately became grave.

They walked for some time side by side, my father expressing, with the warmth of a heart still throbbing with emotion, all that this work had made him feel; his companion remaining cold and silent. The former extolled the glory of the great Genevese writer, whose genius had made him a citizen of the world; he expatiated on this privilege

of great thinkers, who reign in spite of time and space, and gather together a people of willing subjects out of all nations; but the stranger suddenly interrupted him:

"And how do you know," said he mildly, "whether Jean Jacques would not exchange the reputation which you seem to envy for the life of one of the wood-cutters whose chimney's smoke we see? What has fame brought him except persecution? The unknown friends whom his books may have made for him content themselves with blessing him in their hearts, while the declared enemies that they have drawn upon him pursue him with violence and calumny! His pride has been flattered by success: how many times has it been wounded by satire? And be assured that human pride is like the Sybarite who was prevented from sleeping by a crease in a rose-leaf. The activity of a vigorous mind, by which the world profits, almost always turns against him who possesses it. He expects more from it as he grows older; the ideal he pursues continually disgusts him with the actual; he is like a man who, with a too-refined sight, discerns spots and blemishes in the most beautiful face. I will not speak of stronger temptations and of deeper downfalls. Genius, you have said, is a kingdom; but what virtuous man is not afraid of being a king? He who feels only his great powers is—with the weaknesses and passions of our nature—preparing for great failures. Believe me, sir, the unhappy man who wrote this book is no object of admiration

or of envy; but if you have a feeling heart pity him!"

My father, astonished at the excitement with which his companion pronounced these last words, did not know what to answer.

Just then they reached the paved road which led from Meudon castle to that of Versailles; a carriage was passing.

The ladies who were in it perceived the old man, uttered an exclamation of surprise, and leaning out of the window repeated:

"There is Jean Jacques—there is Rousseau!"

Then the carriage disappeared in the distance.

My father remained motionless, confounded, and amazed, his eyes wide open and his hands clasped.

Rousseau, who had shuddered on hearing his name spoken, turned toward him:

"You see," said he, with the bitter misanthropy which his later misfortunes had produced in him, "Jean Jacques cannot even hide himself; he is an object of curiosity to some, of malignity to others, and to all he is a public thing, at which they point the finger. It would signify less if he had only to submit to the impertinence of the idle; but as soon as a man has had the misfortune to make himself a name he becomes public property. Every one rakes into his life, relates his most trivial actions, and insults his feelings; he becomes like those walls which every passer-by may deface with some abusive writing. Perhaps you will say that I have my-

self encouraged this curiosity by publishing my 'Memoirs.' But the world forced me to it. They looked into my house through the blinds and they slandered me; I have opened the doors and windows, so that they should at least know me such as I am. Adieu, sir. Whenever you wish to know the worth of fame, remember that you have seen Rousseau."

Nine O'clock.—Ah! now I understand my father's story! It contains the answer to one of the questions I asked myself a week ago. Yes, I now feel that fame and power are gifts that are dearly bought; and that when they dazzle the soul both of them are oftenest, as Madame de Staël says, but "un deuil éclatant de bonheur!" *

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* 'Tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glistering grief,
And wear a golden sorrow.
—*Henry VIII.*, Act II., Scene 3.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISANTHROPY AND REPENTANCE.

August 3d, Nine O'clock P.M.—The reare days when everything appears gloomy to us; the world is, like the sky, covered by a dark fog. Nothing seems in its place; we only see misery, improvidence, and cruelty; the world seems without God and given up to all the evils of chance.

Yesterday I was in this unhappy humor. After a long walk in the faubourgs I returned home, sad and dispirited.

Everything I had seen seemed to accuse the civilization of which we are so proud! I had wandered into a little by street, with which I was not acquainted, and I found myself suddenly in the middle of those dreadful abodes where the poor are born, languish, and die. I looked at those decaying walls which time has covered with a foul leprosy; those windows from which dirty rags hang out to dry; those fetid gutters which coil along the fronts of the houses like venomous reptiles! I felt oppressed with grief and hastened on.

A little further on was I stopped by the hearse of a hospital; a dead man, nailed down in his deal coffin, was going to his last abode, without funeral

pomp or ceremony and without followers. There was not here even that last friend of the outcast—the dog, which a painter has introduced as the sole attendant at the pauper's burial! He whom they were preparing to commit to the earth was going to the tomb, as he had lived, alone; doubtless no one would be aware of his end. In this great battle of society, what signifies a soldier the less?

But what, then, is this human society, if one of its members can thus disappear like a leaf carried away by the wind?

The hospital was near a barrack, at the entrance of which old men, women, and children were quarreling for the remains of the coarse bread which the soldiers had given them in charity! Thus beings like ourselves daily wait in destitution on our compassion till we give them leave to live! Whole troops of outcasts, in addition to the trials imposed on all God's children, have to endure the pangs of cold, hunger, and humiliation. Unhappy human commonwealth! where man is in a worse condition than the bee in its hive or the ant in its subterranean city!

Ah! what, then avails our reason? What is the good of so many high faculties if we are neither the wiser nor the happier for them? Which of us would not exchange his life of labor and trouble with that of the birds of the air, to whom the whole world is a life of joy?

How well I understand the complaint of Mao, in the popular tales of the "Foyer Breton," who, when

dying of hunger and thirst, says, as he looks at the bullfinches rifling the fruit-trees:

"Alas! those birds are happier than Christians; they have no need of inns, or butchers, or bakers, or gardeners. God's heaven belongs to them, and earth spreads a continual feast before them! The tiny flies are their game, ripe grass their corn-fields, and hips and haws their store of fruit. They have the right of taking everywhere without paying or asking leave: thus comes it that the little birds are happy and sing all the livelong day!"

But the life of man in a natural state is like that of the birds; he equally enjoys nature. "The earth spreads a continual feast before him." What, then, has he gained by that selfish and imperfect association which forms a nation? Would it not be better for every one to return again to the fertile bosom of Nature, and live there upon her bounty in peace and liberty?

August 10th, Four O'clock P.M.—The dawn casts a red glow on my bed-curtains; the breeze brings in the fragrance of the gardens below. Here I am again leaning on my elbows by the window, inhaling the freshness and gladness of this first wakening of the day.

My eye always passes over the roofs filled with flowers, warbling, and sunlight, with the same pleasure; but to-day it stops at the end of a buttress which separates our house from the next. The storms have stripped the top of its plaster covering, and dust carried by the wind has collected in the

crevices, and, being fixed there by the rain, has formed a sort of aërial terrace, where some green grass has sprung up. Among it rises a stalk of wheat, which to-day is surmounted by a sickly ear that droops its yellow head.

This poor stray crop on the roofs, the harvest of which will fall to the neighboring sparrows, has carried my thoughts to the rich crops which are now falling beneath the sickle; it has recalled to me the beautiful walks I took as a child through my native province, when the threshing-floors at the farm-houses resounded from every part with the sound of the flail, and when the carts, loaded with golden sheaves, came in by all the roads. I still remember the songs of the maidens, the cheerfulness of the old men, the open-hearted merriment of the laborers. There was, at that time, something in their looks both of pride and feeling. The latter came from thankfulness to God, the former from the sight of the harvest, the reward of their labor. They felt indistinctly the grandeur and the holiness of their part in the general work of the world; they looked with pride upon their mountains of corn sheaves, and they seemed to say, Next to God, it is we who feed the world!

What a wonderful order there is in all human labor! While the husbandman furrows his land and prepares for every one his daily bread, the town artisan, far away, weaves the stuff in which he is to be clothed; the miner seeks under ground the iron for his plow; the soldier defends him against the in-

vader; the judge takes care that the law protects his fields; the tax-comptroller adjusts his private interests with those of the public; the merchant occupies himself in exchanging his products with those of distant countries; the men of science and of art add every day a few horses to this ideal team, which draws along the material world as steam impels the gigantic trains of our iron roads! Thus all unite together, all help one another; the toil of each one benefits himself and all the world; the work has been apportioned among the different members of the whole of society by a tacit agreement. If, in this apportionment, errors are committed, if certain individuals have not been employed according to their capacities, these defects of detail diminish in the sublime conception of the whole. The poorest man included in this association has his place, his work, his reason for being there; each is something in the whole.

There is nothing like this for man in the state of nature. As he depends only upon himself, it is necessary that he be sufficient for everything. All creation is his property; but he finds in it as many hindrances as helps. He must surmount these obstacles with the single strength that God has given him; he cannot reckon on any other aid than chance and opportunity. No one reaps, manufactures, fights, or thinks for him; he is nothing to any one. He is a unit multiplied by the cipher of his own single powers; while the civilized man is a unit multiplied by the powers of the whole of society.

Yet notwithstanding this, the other day, disgusted by the sight of some vices in detail, I cursed the latter and almost envied the life of the savage.

One of the infirmities of our nature is always to mistake feeling for evidence and to judge of the season by a cloud or a ray of sunshine.

Was the misery, the sight of which made me regret a savage life, really the effect of civilization? Must we accuse society of having created these evils, or acknowledge, on the contrary, that it has alleviated them? Could the women and children who were receiving the coarse bread from the soldiers hope in the desert for more help or pity? That dead man, whose forsaken state I deplored, had he not found, by the cares of a hospital, a coffin and the humble grave where he was about to rest? Alone, and far from men, he would have died like the wild beast in his den and would now be serving as food for vultures! These benefits of human society are shared, then, by the most destitute. Whoever eats the bread that another has reaped and kneaded is under an obligation to his brother and cannot say he owes him nothing in return. The poorest of us has received from society much more than his own single strength would have permitted him to wrest from nature.

But cannot society give us more? Who doubts it? Errors have been committed in this distribution of tasks and workers. Time will diminish the number of them; with new lights a better division will arise; the elements of society go on toward

perfection, like everything else. The difficulty is to know how to adapt ourselves to the slow step of time, whose progress can never be forced on without danger.

August 14th, Six O'clock P.M.—My garret window rises upon the roof like a massive watch-tower. The corners are covered by large sheets of lead, which run into the tiles; the successive action of cold and heat has made them rise, and so a crevice has been formed in an angle on the right side. There a sparrow has built her nest.

I have followed the progress of this aërial habitation from the first day. I have seen the bird successively bring the straw, moss, and wool designed for the construction of her abode; and I have admired the persevering skill she expended in this difficult work. At first, my new neighbor spent her days in fluttering over the poplar in the garden and in chirping along the gutters; a fine lady's life seemed the only one to suit her. Then, all of a sudden, the necessity of preparing a shelter for her brood transformed our idler into a worker; she no longer gave herself either rest or relaxation. I saw her always either flying, fetching, or carrying; neither rain nor sun stopped her. A striking example of the power of necessity! We are not only indebted to it for most of our talents, but for many of our virtues!

Is it not necessity which has given the people of less favored climates that constant activity which has placed them so quickly at the head of nations?

As they are deprived of most of the gifts of nature, they have supplied them by their industry; necessity has sharpened their understanding, endurance awakened their foresight. While elsewhere man, warmed by an ever-brilliant sun and loaded with the bounties of the earth, was remaining poor, ignorant, and naked, in the midst of gifts he did not attempt to explore, here he was forced by necessity to wrest his food from the ground, to build habitations to defend himself from the intemperance of the weather, and to warm his body by clothing himself with the wool of animals. Work makes him both more intelligent and more robust: disciplined by it, he seems to mount higher on the ladder of creation, while those more favored by nature remain on the step the nearest to the brutes.

I made these reflections while looking at the bird, whose instinct seemed to have become more acute since she had been occupied in work. At last the nest was finished; she set up her household there, and I followed her through all the phases of her new existence.

When she had sat on the eggs and the young ones were hatched, she fed them with the most attentive care. The corner of my window had become a stage of moral action, which fathers and mothers might come to take lessons from. The little ones soon became great, and this morning I have seen them take their first flight. One of them, weaker than the others, was not able to clear the

edge of the roof and fell into the gutter. I caught him with some difficulty and placed him again on the tile in front of his house, but the mother has not noticed him. Once freed from the cares of a family, she has resumed her wandering life among the trees and along the roofs. In vain I have kept away from my window, to take from her every excuse for fear; in vain the feeble little bird has called to her with plaintive cries; his bad mother has passed by singing and fluttering with a thousand airs and graces. Once only the father came near; he looked at his offspring with contempt and then disappeared never to return!

I crumbled some bread before the little orphan, but he did not know how to peck it with his bill. I tried to catch him, but he escaped into the forsaken nest. What will become of him there if his mother does not come back!

August 15th, Six O'clock.—This morning, on opening my window, I found the little bird dying upon the tiles; his wounds showed me that he had been driven from the nest by his unworthy mother. I tried in vain to warm him again with my breath; I felt the last pulsations of life; his eyes were already closed and his wings hung down! I placed him on the roof in a ray of sunshine and closed my window. The struggle of life against death has always something gloomy in it: it is a warning to us.

Happily I hear some one in the passage; without doubt it is my old neighbor; his conversation will distract my thoughts.

. . . . . .

It was my portress. Excellent woman! She wished me to read a letter from her son the sailor, and begged me to answer it for her.

I kept it, to copy it in my journal. Here it is:

"DEAR MOTHER: This is to tell you that I have been very well ever since the last time, except that last week I was nearly drowned with the boat, which would have been a great loss, as there is not a better craft anywhere.

"A gust of wind capsized us; and just as I came up above water, I saw the captain sinking. I went after him, as was my duty, and, after diving three times, I brought him to the surface, which pleased him much; for when we were hoisted on board and he had recovered his senses, he threw his arms round my neck, as he would have done to an officer.

"I do not hide from you, dear mother, that this has delighted me. But it isn't all; it seems that fishing up the captain has reminded them that I had a good character, and they have just told me that I am promoted to be a sailor of the first class! Directly I knew it, I cried out, 'My mother shall have coffee twice a day!' And really, dear mother, there is nothing now to hinder you, as I shall now have a larger allowance to send you.

"I conclude by begging you to take care of yourself if you wish to do me good; for nothing makes me feel so well as to think that you want for nothing.

"Your son, from the bottom of my heart,

"JACQUES."

This is the answer that the portress dictated to me:

"My Good Jacquot: It makes me very happy to see that your heart is still as true as ever, and that you will never shame those who have brought you up. I need not tell you to take care of your life, because you know it is the same as my own, and that without you, dear child, I should wish for nothing but the grave; but we are not bound to live, while we are bound to do our duty.

"Do not fear for my health, good Jacques; I was never better! I do not grow old at all, for fear of making you unhappy. I want nothing, and I live like a lady. I even had some money over this year, and as my drawers shut very badly I put it into the savings bank, where I have opened an account in your name. So, when you come back, you will find yourself with an income. I have also furnished your chest with new linen, and I have knitted you three new sea-jackets.

"All your friends are well. Your cousin is just dead, leaving his widow in difficulties. I gave her your 30 francs remittance, and said that you had sent it her; and the poor woman remembers you day and night in her prayers. So, you see, I have put that money in another sort of savings bank; but there it is our hearts which get the interest.

"Good-by, dear Jacquot. Write to me often, and always remember the good God and your old mother, Phrosine Millot."

Good son and worthy mother! how such examples bring us back to a love for the human race! In a fit of fanciful misanthropy we may envy the fate of the savage and prefer that of the bird to such as he; but impartial observation soon does justice to such paradoxes. We find, on examina-

tion, that in the mixed good and evil of human nature, the good so far abounds that we are not in the habit of noticing it, while the evil strikes us precisely on account of its being the exception. If nothing is perfect, nothing is so bad as to be without its compensation or its remedy. What spiritual riches are there in the midst of the evils of society! how much does the moral world redeem the material!

That which will ever distinguish man from the rest of creation is his power of deliberate affection and of enduring self-sacrifice. The mother who took care of her brood in the corner of my window devoted to them the necessary time for accomplishing the laws which insure the preservation of her kind; but she obeyed an instinct and not a rational choice. When she had accomplished the mission appointed her by Providence she cast off the duty as we get rid of a burden, and she returned again to her selfish liberty. The other mother, on the contrary, will go on with her task as long as God shall leave her here below: the life of her son will still remain, so to speak, joined to her own; and when she disappears from the earth she will leave there that part of herself.

Thus the affections make for our species an existence separate from all the rest of creation. Thanks to them, we enjoy a sort of terrestrial immortality; and if other beings succeed one another, man alone perpetuates himself.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FAMILY OF MICHAEL AROUT.

September 15th, Eight O'clock.—This morning while I was arranging my books Mother Genevieve came in and brought me the basket of fruit I buy of her every Sunday. For nearly twenty years that I have lived in this quarter I have dealt in her little fruit-shop. Perhaps I should be better served elsewhere, but Mother Genevieve has but little custom; to leave her would do her harm and cause her unnecessary pain. It seems to me that the length of our acquaintance has made me incur a sort of tacit obligation to her; my patronage has become her property.

She has put the basket upon my table, and as I wanted her husband, who is a joiner, to add some shelves to my bookcase, she has gone downstairs again immediately to send him to me.

At first I did not notice either her looks or the sound of her voice: but, now that I recall them, it seems to me that she was not as jovial as usual. Can Mother Genevieve be in trouble about anything?

Poor woman! All her best years were subject to such bitter trials that she might think she had

received her full share already. Were I to live a hundred years I should never forget the circumstances which first made her known to me and which obtained her my respect.

It was at the time of my first settling in the faubourg. I had noticed her empty fruit-shop, which nobody came into, and being attracted by its forsaken appearance I made my little purchases in it. I have always instinctively preferred the poor shops; there is less choice in them, but it seems to me that my purchase is a sign of sympathy with a brother in poverty. These little dealings are almost always an anchor of hope to those whose very existence is in peril—the only means by which some orphan gains a livelihood. There the aim of the tradesman is not to enrich himself, but to live! The purchase you make of him is more than an exchange—it is a good action.

Mother Genevieve at that time was still young, but had already lost that fresh bloom of youth which suffering causes to wither so soon among the poor. Her husband, a clever joiner, gradually left off working to become, according to the picturesque expression of the workshops, "a worshiper of Saint Monday." The wages of the week, which was always reduced to two or three working days, were completely dedicated by him to the worship of this god of the Barriers,* and Genevieve was obliged herself to provide for all the wants of the household.

* The cheap wine-shops are outside the Barriers, to avoid the *octroi*, or municipal excise.

One evening, when I went to make some trifling purchases of her, I heard a sound of quarreling in the back shop. There were the voices of several women, among which I distinguished that of Genevieve, broken by sobs. On looking further in, I perceived the fruit-woman with a child in her arms, and kissing it, while a country nurse seemed to be claiming her wages from her. The poor woman, who without doubt had exhausted every explanation and every excuse, was crying in silence, and one of her neighbors was trying in vain to appease the country woman. Excited by that love of money which the evils of a hard peasant life but too well excuse, and disappointed by the refusal of her expected wages, the nurse was launching forth in recriminations, threats, and abuse. In spite of myself, I listened to the quarrel, not daring to interfere, and not thinking of going away, when Michael Arout appeared at the shop-door.

The joiner had just come from the Barrier, where he had passed part of the day at the public-house. His blouse, without a belt and untied at the throat, showed none of the noble stains of work: in his hand he held his cap, which he had just picked up out of the mud; his hair was in disorder, his eye fixed, and the pallor of drunkenness in his face. He came reeling in, looked wildly around him, and called Genevieve.

She heard his voice, gave a start, and rushed into the shop; but at the sight of the miserable man, who was trying in vain to steady himself, she

pressed the child in her arms and bent over it with tears.

The country woman and the neighbor had followed her.

"Come! come! do you intend to pay me, after all?" cried the former in a rage.

"Ask the master for the money," ironically answered the woman from the next door, pointing to the joiner, who had just fallen against the counter.

The country woman looked at him.

"Ah! he is the father," returned she. "Well, what idle beggars! not to have a penny to pay honest people, and get tipsy with wine in that way."

The drunkard raised his head.

"What! what!" stammered he; "who is it that talks of wine? I've had nothing but brandy! But I am going back again to get some wine! Wife, give me your money; there are some friends waiting for me at the *Père la Tuille*."

Genevieve did not answer: he went round the counter, opened the till, and began to rummage in it.

"You see where the money of the house goes!" observed the neighbor to the country woman; "how can the poor unhappy woman pay you when he takes all?"

"Is that my fault?" replied the nurse angrily. "They owe it to me and somehow or other they must pay me!"

And letting loose her tongue, as those women out of the country do, she began relating at length all the care she had taken of the child and all the expense it had been to her. In proportion as she recalled all she had done, her words seemed to convince her more than ever of her rights and to increase her anger. The poor mother, who no doubt feared that her violence would frighten the child, returned into the back shop and put it into its cradle.

Whether it is that the country woman saw in this act a determination to escape her claims, or that she was blinded by passion, I cannot say; but she rushed into the next room, where I heard the sounds of quarreling, with which the cries of the child were soon mingled. The joiner, who was still rummaging in the till, was startled and raised his head.

At the same moment Genevieve appeared at the door, holding in her arms the baby that the country woman was trying to tear from her. She ran toward the counter, and throwing herself behind her husband cried:

"Michael, defend your son!"

The drunken man quickly stood up erect, like one who awakes with a start.

"My son!" stammered he; "what son?"

His looks fell upon the child; a vague ray of intelligence passed over his features.

"Robert," resumed he; "it is Robert!"

He tried to steady himself on his feet, that he

might take the baby, but he tottered. The nurse approached him in a rage.

"My money, or I shall take the child away!" cried she. "It is I who have fed and brought it up: if you don't pay me for what has made it live, it ought to be the same to you as if it were dead. I shall not go until I have my due or the baby."

"And what would do with him?" murmured Genevieve, pressing Robert against her bosom.

"Take it to the Foundling!" replied the country woman harshly; "the hospital is a better mother than you are, for it pays for the food of its little ones."

At the word "Foundling," Genevieve had exclaimed aloud in horror. With her arms wound round her son, whose head she hid in her bosom, and her two hands spread over him, she had retreated to the wall, and remained with her back against it, like a lioness defending her young ones. The neighbor and I contemplated this scene, without knowing how we could interfere. As for Michael, he looked at us by turns, making a visible effort to comprehend it all. When his eye rested upon Genevieve and the child, it lit up with a gleam of pleasure; but when he turned toward us, he again became stupid and hesitating.

At last, apparently making a prodigious effort, he cried out, "Wait!'

And going to a tub full of water, he plunged his face into it several times.

Every eye was turned upon him; the country

woman herself seemed astonished. At length he raised his dripping head. This ablution had partly dispelled his drunkenness; he looked at us for a moment, then he turned to Genevieve, and his face brightened up.

"Robert!" cried he, going up to the child and taking him in his arms. "Ah! give him me, wife; I must look at him."

The mother seemed to give up his son to him with reluctance, and stayed before him with her arms extended, as if she feared the child would have a fall. The nurse began again in her turn to speak, and renewed her claims, this time threatening to appeal to law. At first Michael listened to her attentively, and when he comprehended her meaning he gave the child back to its mother.

"How much do we owe you?" asked he.

The country woman began to reckon up the different expenses, which amounted to nearly 30 francs. The joiner felt to the bottom of his pockets, but could find nothing. His forehead became contracted by frowns; low curses began to escape him. All of a sudden he rummaged in his breast, drew forth a large watch, and holding it up above his head—

"Here it is—here's your money!" cried he with a joyful laugh; "a watch, number one! I always said it would keep for a drink on a dry day; but it is not I who will drink it, but the young one. Ah! ah! ah! go and sell it for me, neighbor, and if that is not enough, I have my earrings. Eh! Genevieve,

take them off for me; the earrings will square all! They shall not say you have been disgraced on account of the child—no, not even if I must pledge a bit of my flesh! My watch, my earrings, and my ring—get rid of all of them for me at the goldsmith's; pay the woman and let the little fool go to sleep. Give him me, Genevieve; I will put him to bed."

And taking the baby from the arms of his mother, he carried him with a firm step to his cradle.

It was easy to perceive the change which took place in Michael from this day. He cut all his old drinking acquaintances. He went early every morning to his work, and returned regularly in the evening to finish the day with Genevieve and Robert. Very soon he would not leave them at all, and he hired a place near the fruit-shop and worked in it on his own account.

They would soon have been able to live in comfort, had it not been for the expenses which the child required. Everything was given up to his education. He had gone through the regular school training, had studied mathematics, drawing, and the carpenter's trade, and had only begun to work a few months ago. Till now, they had been exhausting every resource which their laborious industry could provide to push him forward in his business; but, happily, all these exertions had not proved useless: the seed had brought forth its fruits, and the days of harvest were close by.

While I was thus recalling these remembrances

to my mind, Michael had come in and was occupied in fixing shelves where they were wanted.

During the time I was writing the notes of my journal, I was also scrutinizing the joiner.

The excesses of his youth and the labor of his manhood have deeply marked his face; his hair is thin and gray, his shoulders stooping, his legs shrunken and slightly bent. There seems a sort of weight in his whole being. His very features have an expression of sorrow and despondency. He answered my questions by monosyllables, and like a man who wishes to avoid conversation. From whence is this dejection, when one would think he had all he could wish for? I should like to know!

Ten O'clock.—Michael is just gone downstairs to look for a tool he has forgotten. I have at last succeeded in drawing from him the secret of his and Genevieve's sorrow. Their son Robert is the cause of it!

Not that he has turned out ill after all their care—not that he is idle and dissipated; but both were in hopes he would never leave them any more. The presence of the young man was to have renewed and made glad their lives once more; his mother counted the days, his father prepared everything to receive their dear associate in their toils; and at the moment when they were thus about to be repaid for all their sacrifices, Robert had suddenly informed them that he had just engaged himself to a contractor at Versailles.

Every remonstrance and every prayer were use-

less; he brought forward the necessity of initiating himself into all the details of an important contract, the facilities he should have in his new position of improving himself in his trade, and the hopes he had of turning his knowledge to advantage. At last, when his mother, having come to the end of her arguments, began to cry, he hastily kissed her and went away that he might avoid any further remonstrances.

He had been absent a year, and there was nothing to give them hopes of his return. His parents hardly saw him once a month, and then he only stayed a few moments with them.

"I have been punished where I had hoped to be rewarded," Michael said to me just now. "I had wished for a saving and industrious son, and God has given me an ambitious and avaricious one! I had always said to myself that when once he was grown up we should have him always with us, to recall our youth and to enliven our hearts. His mother was always thinking of getting him married and having children again to care for. You know women always will busy themselves about others. As for me, I thought of him working near my bench and singing his new songs; for he has learned music and is one of the best singers at the Orphéon. A dream, sir, truly! Directly the bird was fledged, he took to flight, and remembers neither father nor mother. Yesterday, for instance, was the day we expected him; he should have come to supper with us. No Robert to-day either! He has had some

plan to finish, or some bargain to arrange, and his old parents are put down last in the accounts, after the customers and the joiner's work. Ah! if I could have guessed kow it would have turned out! Fool! to have sacrificed my likings and my money, for nearly twenty years, to the education of a thankless son! Was it for this I took the trouble to cure myself of drinking, to break with my friends, to become an example to the neighborhood? The jovial good fellow has made a goose of himself. Oh! if I had to begin again! No, no! you see women and children are our bane. They soften our hearts; they lead us a life of hope and affection; we pass a quarter of our lives in fostering the growth of a grain of corn which is to be everything to us in our old age, and when the harvest-time comes—good-night, the ear is empty!"

While he was speaking, Michael's voice became hoarse, his eye fierce, and his lips quivered. I wished to answer him, but I could only think of commonplace consolations, and I remained silent. The joiner pretended he wanted a tool and left me.

Poor father! Ah! I know those moments of temptation when virtue has failed to reward us and we regret having obeyed her! Who has not felt this weakness in hours of trial, and who has not uttered, at least once, the mournful exclamation of Brutus?

But if virtue is only a word, what is there then

in life which is true and real? No, I will not believe that goodness is in vain! It does not always give the happiness we had hoped for, but it brings some other. In the world everything is ruled by order and has its proper and necessary consequences, and virtue cannot be the sole exception to the general law. If it had been prejudicial to those who practice it, experience would have avenged them; but experience has, on the contrary, made it more universal and more holy. We only accuse it of being a faithless debtor because we demand an immediate payment, and one apparent to our senses. We always consider life as a fairy tale, in which every good action must be rewarded by a visible wonder. We do not accept as payment a peaceful conscience, self-content, or a good name among men—treasures that are more precious than any other, but the value of which we do not feel till after we have lost them!

Michael is come back and returned to his work. His son had not yet arrived.

By telling me of his hopes and his grievious disappointments, he became excited; he unceasingly went over again the same subject, always adding something to his griefs. He has just wound up his confidential discourse by speaking to me of a joiner's business which he had hoped to buy and work to good account with Robert's help. The present owner had made a fortune by it, and after thirty years of business he was thinking of retiring to one of the ornamental cottages in the outskirts of the

city, a usual retreat for the frugal and successful workingman. Michael had not indeed the 2,000 francs which must be paid down; but perhaps he could have persuaded Master Benoit to wait. Robert's presence would have been a security for him, for the young man could not fail to insure the prosperity of a workshop; besides science and skill, he had the power of invention and bringing to perfection. His father had discovered among his drawings a new plan for a staircase, which had occupied his thoughts for a long time; and he even suspected him of having engaged himself to the Versailles contractor for the very purpose of executing it. The youth was tormented by this spirit of invention, which took possession of all his thoughts and while devoting his mind to study he had no time to listen to his feelings.

Michael told me all this with a mixed feeling of pride and vexation. I saw he was proud of the son he was abusing, and that his very pride made him more sensible of that son's neglect.

Six O'clock P. M.—I have just finished a happy day. How many events have happened within a few hours, and what a change for Genevieve and Michael!

He had just finished fixing the shelves and telling me of his son, while I laid the cloth for my breakfast.

Suddenly we heard hurried steps in the passage, the door opened, and Genevieve entered with Robert.

The joiner gave a start of joyful surprise, but he repressed it immediately, as if he wished to keep up the appearance of displeasure.

The young man did not appear to notice it, but threw himself into his arms in an open-hearted manner which surprised me. Genevieve, whose face shone with happiness, seemed to wish to speak, and to restrain herself with difficulty.

I told Robert I was glad to see him, and he answered me with ease and civility.

"I expected you yesterday," said Michael Arout rather dryly.

"Forgive me, father," replied the young workman, "but I had business at St. Germain's. I was not able to come back till it was very late, and then the master kept me."

The joiner looked at his son sideways, and then took up his hammer again.

"All right," muttered he in a grumbling tone; "when we are with other people we must do as they wish; but there are some who would like better to eat brown bread with their own knife than partridges with the silver fork of a master."

"And I am one of those, father," replied Robert merrily; "but, as the proverb says, 'you must shell the peas before you can eat them.' It was necessary that I should first work in a great workshop——"

"To go on with your plan of the staircase," interrupted Michael, ironically.

"You must now say M. Raymond's plan, father," replied Robert, smiling.

"Why?"

"Because I have sold it to him."

The joiner, who was planing a board, turned round quickly.

"Sold it!" cried he, with sparkling eyes.

"For the reason that I was not rich enough to give it him."

Michael threw down the board and tool.

"There he is again!" resumed he angrily; "his good genius puts an idea into his head which would have made him known, and he goes and sells it to a rich man, who will take all the honor of it himself."

"Well, what harm is there done?" asked Genevieve.

"What harm!" cried the joiner in a passion. "You understand nothing about it—you are a woman; but he—he knows well that a true workman never gives up his own inventions for money, no more than a soldier would give up his cross. That is his glory; he is bound to keep it for the honor it does him! Ah! thunder! if I had ever made a discovery, rather than put it up at auction I would have sold one of my eyes! Don't you see that a new invention is like a child to a workman? He takes care of it, he brings it up, he makes a way for it in the world, and it is only poor creatures who sell it."

Robert colored a little.

"You will think differently, father," said he, "when you know why I sold my plan."

"Yes, and you will thank him for it," added Genevieve, who could no longer keep silence.

"Never!" replied Michael.

"But, wretched man!" cried she, "he only sold it for our sakes!"

The joiner looked at his wife and son with astonishment. It was necessary to come to an explanation. The latter related how he had entered into a negotiation with Master Benoit, who had positively refused to sell his business unless one-half of the 2,000 frances were first paid down. It was in the hopes of obtaining this sum that he had gone to work with the contractor at Versailles; he had had an opportunity of trying his invention and of finding a purchaser. Thanks to the money he received for it, he had just concluded the bargain with Benoit, and had brought his father the key of the new work-yard.

This explanation was given by the young workman with so much modesty and simplicity that I was quite affected by it. Genevieve cried; Michael pressed his son to his heart, and in a long embrace he seemed to ask his pardon for having unjustly accused him.

All was now explained with honor to Robert. The conduct which his parents had ascribed to indifference really sprang from affection; he had neither obeyed the voice of ambition nor of avarice, nor even the nobler inspiration of inventive genius; his whole motive and single aim had been the happiness of Genevieve and Michael. The day for

proving his gratitude had come, and he had returned them sacrifice for sacrifice!

After the explanations and exclamations of joy were over, all three were about to leave me; but the cloth being laid, I added three more places, and kept them to breakfast.

The meal was prolonged: the fare was only tolerable, but the overflowings of affection made it delicious. Never had I better understood the unspeakable charm of family love. What calm enjoyment in that happiness which is always shared with others; in that community of interests which unites such various feeling; in that association of existences which forms one single being of so many! What is man without those home affections which, like so many roots, fix him firmly in the earth and permit him to imbibe all the juices of life? Energy, happiness—does it not all come from them? Without family life where would man learn to love, to associate, to deny himself? A community in little, is it not this which teaches us how to live in the great one? Such is the holiness of home, that to express our relation with God we have been obliged to borrow the words invented for our family life. Men have named themselves the sons of a heavenly Father!

Ah! let us carefully preserve these chains of domestic union; do not let us unbind the human sheaf and scatter its ears to all the caprices of chance and of the winds; but let us rather enlarge this holy law; let us carry the principles and the habits

of home beyond its bounds; and, if it may be, let us realize the prayer of the Apostle of the Gentiles when he exclaimed to the new-born children of Christ:

"Be ye like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." *

* Philippians ii. 2.

CHAPTER X.

OUR COUNTRY.

October 7th, Seven O'clock A.M.—The nights are already become cold and long; the sun, shining through my curtains, no more wakens me long before the hour for work; and even when my eyes are open, the pleasant warmth of the bed keeps me fast under my counterpane. Every morning there begins a long argument between my activity and my indolence; and, snugly wrapped up to the eyes, I wait, like the Gascon, until they have succeeded in coming to an agreement.

This morning, however, a light which shone from my door upon my pillow awoke me earlier than usual. In vain I turned on my side; the persevering light, like a victorious enemy, pursued me into every position. At last, quite out of patience, I sat up and hurled my nightcap to the foot of the bed!

(I will observe, by way of parenthesis, that the various evolutions of this pacific head-gear seem to have been, from the remotest time, symbols of the vehement emotions of the mind; for our language has borrowed its most common images from them. Thus we say: *Mettre son bonnet de travers; jeter son*

bonnet par-dessus les moulins ; avoir la tête près du bonnet, etc.*)

But be this as it may, I got up in a very bad humor, grumbling at my new neighbor, who took it into his head to be wakeful when I wished to sleep. We are all made thus; we do not understand that others may live on their own account. Each one of us is like the earth according to the old system of Ptolemy, and thinks he can have the whole universe revolve round himself. On this point, to make use of the metaphor alluded to: *Tous les hommes ont la tête dans le même bonnet.*†

I had for the time being, as I have already said, thrown mine to the other end of my bed; and I slowly disengaged my legs from the warm bed-clothes while making a host of evil reflections upon the inconvenience of having neighbors.

For more than a month I had not had to complain of those whom chance had given me; most of them only came in to sleep, and went away again on rising. I was almost always alone on this top story —alone with the clouds and the sparrows!

But at Paris nothing lasts: the current of life carries us along, like the seaweed torn from the rock: the houses are vessels which take mere passengers. How many different faces have I already seen pass along the landing-place belonging to our

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* To be in a bad humor.
To brave the opinions of the world.
To be angry about a trifle.

† Said of those who are of the same opinions and tastes.

attics! How many companions of a few days have disappeared forever! Some are lost in that medley of the living which whirls continually under the scourge of necessity, and others in that resting-place of the dead who sleep under the hand of God!

Peter the bookbinder is one of these last. Wrapped up in selfishness, he lived alone and friendless, and he died as he had lived. His loss was neither mourned by any one nor disarranged anything in the world; there was merely a ditch filled up in the graveyard and an attic emptied in our house.

It is the same which my new neighbor has inhabited for the last few days.

To say truly (now that I am quite awake and my ill-humor is gone to join my nightcap)—to say truly, this new neighbor, although rising earlier than suits my idleness, is not the less a very good man: he carries his misfortunes as few know how to carry their good fortunes, with cheerfulness and moderation.

But fate has cruelly tried him. Father Chaufour is but the wreck of a man. In the place of one of his arms hangs an empty sleeve; his left leg is made by the turner, and he drags the right along with difficulty; but above these ruins rises a calm and happy face. While looking upon his countenance, radiant with a serene energy, while listening to his voice, the tone of which has, so to speak, the accent of goodness, we see that the soul has remained entire in the half-destroyed covering. The fortress is a little damaged, as Father Chaufour says, but the garrison is quite hearty.

Decidedly, the more I think of this excellent man, the more I reproach myself for the sort of malediction I bestowed on him when I awoke.

We are generally too indulgent in our secret wrongs toward our neighbor. All ill-will which does not pass the region of thought seems innocent to us, and, with our clumsy justice, we excuse without examination the sin which does not betray itself by action!

But are we, then, only bound to others by the enforcement of laws? Besides these external relations, is there not a real relation of feeling between men? Do we not owe to all those who live under the same heaven as ourselves the aid not only of our acts, but of our purposes? Ought not every human life to be to us like a vessel that we accompany with our prayers for a happy voyage? It is not enough that men do not harm one another; they must also help and love one another! The papal benediction, *Urbi et orbi!* should be the constant cry from all hearts. To condemn him who does not deserve it, even in the mind, even by a passing thought, is to break the great law, that which has established the union of souls here below and to which Christ has given the sweet name of charity.

These thoughts came into my mind as I finished dressing, and I said to myself that Father Chaufour had a right to a reparation from me. To make amends for the feeling of ill-will I had against him just now, I owed him some explicit proof of sympathy. I heard him humming a tune in his

room; he was at work, and I determined that I would make the first neighborly call.

Eight O'clock P.M.—I found Father Chaufour at a table lighted by a little smoky lamp, without a fire, although it is already cold, and making large pasteboard boxes; he was humming a popular song in a low tone. I had hardly entered the room when he uttered an exclamation of surprise and pleasure.

"Eh! is it you, neighbor? Come in, then! I did not think you got up so early, so I put a damper on my music; I was afraid of waking you."

Excellent man! while I was sending him to the devil he was putting himself out of his way for me!

This thought touched me, and I paid my compliments on his having become my neighbor with a warmth which opened his heart.

"Faith! you seem to me to have the look of a good Christian," said he in a voice of soldier-like cordiality and shaking me by the hand. "I do not like those people who look on a landing-place as a frontier line, and treat their neighbors as if they were Cossacks. When men snuff the same air and speak the same lingo, they are not meant to turn their backs to each other. Sit down there, neighbor; I don't mean to order you; only take care of the stool; it has but three legs, and we must put good will in the place of the fourth."

"It seems that that is a treasure which there is no want of here," I observed.

"Good will!" repeated Chaufour; "that is all my

mother left me, and I take it no son has received a better inheritance. Therefore they used to call me Mr. Content in the batteries."

"You are a soldier, then?"

"I served in the Third Artillery under the Republic, and afterward in the Guard through all the commotions. I was at Jemappes and at Waterloo; so I was at the christening and at the burial of our glory, as one may say!"

I looked at him with astonishment.

"And how old were you, then, at Jemappes?" asked I.

"Somewhere about fifteen," said he.

"How came you to think of being a soldier so early?"

"I did not really think about it. I then worked at toy making, and never dreamed that France could ask me for anything else than to make her draught-boards, shuttlecocks, and cups and balls. But I had an old uncle at Vincennes whom I went to see from time to time—a Fontenoy veteran in the same rank of life as myself, but with ability enough to have risen to that of a marshal. Unluckily, in those days there was no way for common people to get on. My uncle, whose services would have got him made a prince under the other, had then retired with the mere rank of sub-lieutenant. But you should have seen him in his uniform, his Cross of St. Louis, his wooden leg, his white mustaches, and his noble countenance. You would have said he was a portrait of one of those old heroes in powdered hair which are at Versailles!

"Every time I visited him he said something which remained fixed in my memory. But one day I found him quite grave.

"'Jerome,' said he, 'do you know what is going on on the frontier?'

"'No, lieutenant,' replied I.

"'Well,' resumed he, 'our country is in danger!'

"I did not well understand him, and yet it seemed something to me.

"'Perhaps you have never thought what your country means,' continued he, placing his hand on my shoulder; 'it is all that surrounds you, all that has brought you up and fed you, all that you have loved! This ground that you see, these houses, these trees, those girls who go along there laughing —this is your country! The laws which protect you, the bread which pays for your work, the words you interchange with others, the joy and grief which come to you from the men and things among which you live—this is your country! The little room where you used to see your mother, the remembrances she has left you, the earth where she rests—this is your country! You see it, you breathe it, everywhere! Think to yourself, my son, of your rights and your duties, your affections and your wants, your past and your present blessings; write them all under a single name—and that name will be your country!'

"I was trembling with emotion, and great tears were in my eyes.

"'Ah! I understand,' cried I; 'it is our home in

large; it is that part of the world where God has placed our body and our soul.'

"'You are right, Jerome,' continued the old soldier; 'so you comprehend also what we owe it.'

"'Truly,' resumed I, 'we owe it all that we are; it is a question of love.'

"'And of honesty, my son,' concluded he. 'The member of a family who does not contribute his share of work and of happiness fails in his duty and is a bad kinsman; the member of a partnership who does not enrich it with all his might, with all his courage, and with all his heart, defrauds of it what belongs to it and is a dishonest man. It is the same with him who enjoys the advantages of having a country and does not accept the burdens of it; he forfeits his honor and is a bad citizen!'

"'And what must one do, lieutenant, to be a good citizen?' asked I.

"'Do for your country what you would do for your father and mother,' said he.

"I did not answer at the moment; my heart was swelling and the blood boiling in my veins: but on returning along the road, my uncle's words were, so to speak, written up before my eyes. I repeated, 'Do for your country what you would do for your father and mother.' And my country is in danger; an enemy attacks it, while I—I turn cups and balls!

"This thought tormented me so much all night that the next day I returned to Vincennes to announce to the lieutenant that I had just enlisted

and was going off to the frontiers. The brave man pressed me upon his Cross of St. Louis, and I went away as proud as an ambassador.

"That is how, neighbor, I became a volunteer under the Republic before I had cut my wisdom teeth."

All this was told quietly, and in the cheerful spirit of him who looks upon an accomplished duty neither as a merit nor a grievance.

While he spoke, Father Chaufour grew animated, not on account of himself, but of the general subject. Evidently that which occupied him in the drama of life was not his own part, but the drama itself.

This sort of disinterestedness touched me. I prolonged my visit and showed myself as frank as possible, in order to win his confidence in return. In an hour's time he knew my position and my habits; I was on the footing of an old acquaintance.

I even confessed the ill humor the light of his lamp put me into a short time before. He took what I said with the touching cheerfulness which comes from a heart in the right place and which looks upon everything on the good side. He neither spoke to me of the necessity which obliged him to work while I could sleep, nor of the deprivations of the old soldier compared to the luxury of the young clerk; he only struck his forehead, accused himself of thoughtlessness, and promised to put list round his door!

O great and beautiful soul! with whom nothing

turns to bitterness and who art peremptory only in duty and benevolence!

October 15th.—This morning I was looking at a little engraving I had framed myself and hung over my writing-table; it is a design of Gavarni's, in which, in a grave mood, he has represented "A Veteran and a Conscript." *

By often contemplating these two figures, so different in expression and so true to life, both have become living in my eyes; I have seen them move, I have heard them speak; the picture has become a real scene, at which I am present as spectator.

The veteran advances slowly, his hand leaning on the shoulder of the young soldier. His eyes, closed forever, no longer perceive the sun shining through the flowering chestunt-trees. In the place of his right arm hangs an empty sleeve, and he walks with a wooden leg, the sound of which on the pavement makes those who pass turn to look.

At the sight of this ancient wreck from our patriotic wars, the greater number shake their heads in pity, and I seem to hear a sigh or an imprecation.

"See the worth of glory!" says a portly merchant, turning away his eyes in horror.

"What a deplorable use of human life!" rejoins a young man who carries a volume of philosophy under his arm.

* See this beautiful composition in the *Magasin Pittoresque* for 1847.

"The trooper would better not have left his plow," adds a countryman with a cunning air.

"Poor old man!" murmurs a woman almost crying.

The veteran has heard and he knits his brow; for it seems to him that his guide has grown thoughtful. The latter, attracted by what he hears around him, hardly answers the old man's questions, and his eyes, vaguely lost in space, seem to be seeking there for the solution of some problem.

I seem to see a twitching in the gray mustaches of the veteran; he stops abruptly, and holding back his guide with his remaining arm—

"They all pity me," says he, "because they do not understand it; but if I were to answer them——"

"What would you say to them, father?" asks the young man with curiosity.

"I would say first to the woman who weeps when she looks at me to keep her tears for other misfortunes; for each of my wounds calls to mind some struggle for my colors. There is room for doubting how some men have done their duty: with me it is visible. I carry the account of my services, written with the enemy's steel and lead, on myself; to pity me for having done my duty is to suppose I would better have been false to it."

"And what would you say to the countryman, father?"

"I would tell him that, to drive the plow in peace, we must first secure the country itself; and that, as long as there are foreigners ready to eat our harvest, there must be arms to defend it."

"But the young student, too, shook his head when he lamented such a use of life."

"Because he does not know what self-sacrifice and suffering can teach. The books which he studies we have put in practice, though we never read them: the principles he applauds we have defended with powder and bayonet."

"And at the price of your limbs and your blood. The merchant said, when he saw your maimed body, 'See the worth of glory!'"

"Do not believe him, my son: the true glory is the bread of the soul; it is this which nourishes self-sacrifice, patience, and courage. The Master of all has bestowed it as a tie the more between men. When we desire to be distinguished by our brethren, do we not thus prove our esteem and our sympathy for them? The longing for admiration is but one side of love. No, no; the true glory can never be too dearly paid for! That which we should deplore, child, is not the infirmities which prove a generous self sacrifice, but those which our vices or our imprudence have called forth. Ah! if I could speak aloud to those who, when passing, cast looks of pity upon me, I should say to the young man whose excesses have dimmed his sight before he is old, 'What have you done with your eyes?' To the slothful man who with difficulty drags along his enervated mass of flesh, 'What have you done with your feet?' To the old man who is punished for his intemperance by the gout, 'What have you done with your hands?' To all, 'What

have you done with the days God granted you, with the faculties you should have employed for the good of your brethren?' If you cannot answer, bestow no more of your pity upon the old soldier maimed in his country's cause; for he—he at least—can show his scars without shame."

October 16th.—The little engraving has made me comprehend better the merits of Father Chaufour, and I therefore esteem him all the more.

He has just now left my attic. There no longer passes a single day without his coming to work by my fire or my going to sit and talk by his board.

The old artilleryman has seen much and likes to tell of it. For twenty years he was an armed traveler throughout Europe, and he fought without hatred, for he was possessed by a single thought—the honor of the national flag! It might have been his superstition, if you will; but it was, at the same time, his safeguard.

The word FRANCE, which was then resounding so gloriously through the world, served as a talisman to him against all sorts of temptation. To have to support a great name may seem a burden to vulgar minds, but it is an encouragement to vigorous ones.

"I, too, have had many moments," said he to me the other day, "when I have been tempted to make friends with the devil. War is not precisely the school for rural virtues. By dint of burning, destroying, and killing you grow a little tough as regards your feelings; and when the bayonet has

made you king, the notions of an autocrat come into your head a little strongly. But at these moments I called to mind that country which the lieutenant spoke of to me, and I whispered to myself the well-known phrase, *Toujours Français!* It has been laughed at since. People who would make a joke of the death of their mother have turned it into ridicule, as if the name of our country was not also a noble and a binding thing. For my part, I shall never forget from how many follies the title of Frenchman has kept me. When, overcome with fatigue, I have found myself in the rear of the colors, and when the musketry was rattling in the front ranks, many a time I heard a voice, which whispered in my ear, 'Leave the others to fight, and for to-day take care of your own hide!' But then, that word *Français!* murmured within me, and I pressed forward to help my comrades. At other times, when, irritated by hunger, cold, and wounds, I have arrived at the hovel of some *Meinherr*, I have been seized by an itching to break the master's back and to burn his hut; but I whispered to myself *Français!* and this name would not rhyme either with incendiary or murderer. I have in this way passed through kingdoms from east to west and from north to south, always determined not to bring disgrace upon my country's flag. The lieutenant, you see, had taught me a magic word—My country! Not only must we defend it, but we must also make it great and loved."

October 17th.—To-day I have paid my neighbor a long visit. A chance expression led the way to his telling me more of himself than he had yet done.

I asked him whether both his limbs had been lost in the same battle.

"No, no!" replied he; "the cannon only took my leg; it was the Clamart quarries that my arm went to feed."

And when I asked him for the particulars—

"That's as easy as to say good-morning," continued he. "After the great break-up at Waterloo, I stayed three months in the camp hospital to give my wooden leg time to grow. As soon as I was able to hobble a little I took leave of headquarters and took the road to Paris, where I hoped to find some relation or friend; but no—all were gone or under ground. I should have found myself less strange at Vienna, Madrid, or Berlin. And although I had a leg the less to provide for, I was none the better off; my appetite had come back and my last sous were taking flight.

"I had indeed met my old colonel, who recollected that I had helped him out of the skirmish at Montereau by giving him my horse, and he had offered me bed and board at his house. I knew that the year before he had married a castle and no few farms, so that I might become permanent coat-brusher to a millionaire, which was not without its temptations. It remained to see if I had not anything better to do. One evening I set myself to reflect upon it.

"'Let us see, Chaufour,' said I to myself; 'the question is to act like a man. The colonel's place suits you, but cannot you do anything better? Your body is still in good condition and your arms strong; do you not owe all your strength to your country, as your Vincennes uncle said? Why not leave some old soldier, more cut up than you are, to get his hospital at the colonel's? Come, trooper, you are still fit for another stout charge or two! You must not lay up before your time.'

"Whereupon I went to thank the colonel, and to offer my services to an old artilleryman who had gone back to his home at Clamart and who had taken up the quarryman's pick again.

"For the first few months I played the conscript's part—that is to say, there was more stir than work; but with a good will one gets the better of stones, as of everything else. I did not become, so to speak, the leader of a column, but I brought up the rank among the good workmen, and I ate my bread with a good appetite, seeing I had earned it with a good will. For even under ground, you see, I still kept my pride. The thought that I was working to do my part in changing rocks into houses pleased my heart. I said to myself, 'Courage, Chaufour, my old boy; you are helping to beautify your country.' And that kept up my spirit.

"Unfortunately, some of my companions were rather too sensible to the charms of the brandy bottle; so much so that one day one of them, who

could hardly distinguish his right hand from his left, thought proper to strike a light close to a charged mine. The mine exploded suddenly and sent a shower of stone grape among us, which killed three men and carried away the arm of which I have now only the sleeve."

"So you were again without means of living?" said I to the old soldier.

"That is to say, I had to change them," replied he quietly. "The difficulty was to find one which would do with five fingers instead of ten; I found it, however."

"How was that?"

"Among the Paris street-sweepers."

"What! you have been one——"

"Of the pioneers of the health force for awhile, neighbor, and that was not my worst time either. The corps of sweepers is not so low as it is dirty, I can tell you! There are old actresses in it who could never learn to save their money, and ruined merchants from the exchange; we even had a professor of classics, who for a little drink would recite Latin to you, or Greek tragedies, as you chose. They could not have competed for the Monthyon prize; but we excused faults on account of poverty, and cheered our poverty by our good humor and jokes. I was as ragged and as cheerful as the rest, while trying to be something better. Even in the mire of the gutter I preserved my faith that nothing is dishonorable which is useful to our country.

"'Chaufour,' said I to myself with a smile, 'after

the sword, the hammer; after the hammer, the broom; you are going downstairs, my old boy, but you are still serving your country.'"

"However, you ended by leaving your new profession?" said I.

"A reform was required, neighbor. The street-sweepers seldom have their feet dry, and the damp at last made the wounds in my good leg open again. I could no longer follow the regiment, and it was necessary to lay down my arms. It is now two months since I left off working in the sanitary department of Paris.

"At the first moment I was daunted. Of my four limbs, I had now only my right hand, and even that had lost its strength; so it was necessary to find some gentlemanly occupation for it. After trying a little of everything, I fell upon cardbox making, and here I am at cases for the lace and buttons of the national guard; it is work of little profit, but it is within the capacity of all. By getting up at four and working till eight I earn 65 centimes; my lodging and bowl of soup take 50 of them, and there are 3 sous over for luxuries. So I am richer than France herself, for I have no deficit in my budget; and I continue to serve her, as I save her lace and buttons."

At these words Father Chaufour looked at me with a smile, and with his great scissors began cutting the green paper again for his cardboard cases. My heart was touched and I remained lost in thought.

Here is still another member of that sacred phalanx who, in the battle of life, always march in front for the example and the salvation of the world! Each of these brave soldiers has his war-cry; for this one it is "Country," for that "Home," for a third "Mankind;" but they all follow the same standard —that of duty; for all the same divine law reigns —that of self-sacrifice. To love something more than one's self—that is the secret of all that is great; to know how to live for others—that is the aim of all noble souls.

CHAPTER XI.

MORAL USE OF INVENTORIES.

November 13th, Nine O'clock P.M.—I had well stopped up the chinks of my window; my little carpet was nailed down in its place; my lamp, provided with its shade, cast a subdued light around; and my stove made a low murmuring sound, as if some live creature was sharing my hearth with me.

All was silent around me. But out of doors the snow and rain swept the roofs and with a low rushing sound ran along the gurgling gutters; sometimes a gust of wind forced itself beneath the tiles, which rattled together like castanets, and afterward it was lost in the empty corridor. Then a slight and pleasurable shiver thrilled through my veins: I drew the flaps of my old wadded dressing-gown round me, I pulled my threadbare velvet cap over my eyes, and, letting myself sink deeper into my easy-chair, while my feet basked in the heat and light which shone through the door of the stove, I gave myself up to a sensation of enjoyment, made more lively by the consciousness of the storm which raged without. My eyes, swimming in a sort of mist, wandered over all the details of my peaceful abode; they passed from my prints to my bookcase,

resting upon the little chintz sofa, the white curtains of the iron bedstead, and the portfolio of loose papers—those archives of the attics; and then, returning to the book I held in my hand, they attempted to seize once more the thread of the reading which had been thus interrupted.

In fact this book, the subject of which had at first interested me, had become painful to me. I had come to the conclusion that the pictures of the writer were too somber. His description of the miseries of the world appeared exaggerated to me; I could not believe in such excess of poverty and of suffering; neither God nor man could show themselves so harsh toward the sons of Adam. The author had yielded to an artistic temptation: he was making a show of the sufferings of humanity, as Nero burned Rome for the sake of the picturesque.

Taken altogether, this poor human house, so often repaired, so much criticised, is still a pretty good abode; we may find enough in it to satisfy our wants if we know how to set bounds to them; the happiness of the wise man costs but little and asks but little space.

These consoling reflections became more and more confused. At last my book fell on the ground without my having the resolution to stoop and take it up again; and insensibly overcome by the luxury of the silence, the subdued light, and the warmth, I fell asleep.

I remained for some time lost in the sort of in-

sensibility belonging to a first sleep; at last some vague and broken sensations came over me. It seemed to me that the day grew darker, that the air became colder. I half-perceived bushes covered with the scarlet berries which foretell the coming of winter. I walked on a dreary road, bordered here and there with juniper-trees white with frost. Then the scene suddenly changed. I was in the diligence: the cold wind shook the doors and windows; the trees, loaded with snow, passed by like ghosts; in vain I thrust my benumbed feet into the crushed straw. At last the carriage stopped, and, by one of those stage effects so common in sleep, I found myself alone in a barn, without a fireplace, and open to the winds on all sides. I saw again my mother's gentle face, known only to me in my early childhood, the noble and stern countenance of my father, the little fair head of my sister, who was taken from us at ten years old: all my dead family lived again around me; they were there, exposed to the bitings of the cold and to the pangs of hunger. My mother prayed by the resigned old man, and my sister, rolled up on some rags of which they had made her a bed, cried in silence and held her naked feet in her little blue hands.

It was a page from the book I had just read transferred into my own existence.

My heart was oppressed with inexpressible anguish. Crouched in a corner, with my eyes fixed upon this dismal picture, I felt the cold slowly creeping upon me, and I said to myself with bitterness:

"Let us die, since poverty is a dungeon guarded by suspicion, apathy, and contempt, and from which it is vain to try to escape; let us die, since there is no place for us at the banquet of the living!"

And I tried to rise to join my mother again and to wait at her feet for the hour of release.

This effort dispelled my dream, and I awoke with a start.

I looked around me; my lamp was expiring, the fire in my stove extinguished, and my half-opened door was letting in an icy wind. I got up, with a shiver, to shut and double-lock it; then I made for the alcove and went to bed in haste.

But the cold kept me awake a long time, and my thoughts continued the interrupted dream.

The pictures I had lately accused of exaggeration now seemed but a too faithful representation of reality; and I went to sleep without being able to recover my optimism—or my warmth.

Thus did a cold stove and a badly closed door alter my point of view. All went well when my blood circulated properly; all looked gloomy when the cold laid hold on me.

This reminds me of the story of the duchess who was obliged to pay a visit to the neighboring convent on a winter's day. The convent was poor, there was no wood, and the monks had nothing but their discipline and the ardor of their prayers to keep out the cold. The duchess, who was shivering with cold, returned home greatly pitying the poor monks. While the servants were taking off her

cloak and adding two more logs to her fire, she called for her steward, whom she ordered to send some wood to the convent immediately. She then had her couch moved close to the fireside, the warmth of which soon revived her. The recollection of what she had just suffered was speedily lost in her present comfort, when the steward came in again to ask how many loads of wood he was to send.

"Oh! you may wait," said the great lady carelessly; "the weather is very much milder."

Thus man's judgments are formed less from reason than from sensation; and as sensation comes to him from the outward world, so he finds himself more or less under its influence; by little and little he imbibes a portion of his habits and feelings from it.

It is not, then, without cause that when we wish to judge of a stranger beforehand we look for indications of his character in the circumstances which surround him. The things among which we live are necessarily made to take our image, and we unconsciously leave in them a thousand impressions of our minds. As we can judge by an empty bed of the height and attitude of him who has slept in it, so the abode of every man discovers to a close observer the extent of his intelligence and the feelings of his heart. Bernardin de St. Pierre has related the story of a young girl who refused a suitor because he would never have flowers or domestic animals in his house. Perhaps the sentence was severe,

but not without reason. We may presume that a man insensible to beauty and to humble affection must be ill prepared to feel the enjoyments of a happy marriage.

14*th*, *Seven O'clock* P.M.—This morning as I was opening my journal to write I had a visit from our old cashier.

His sight is not so good as it was, his hand begins to shake, and the work he was able to do formerly is now becoming somewhat laborious to him. I had undertaken to write out some of his papers, and he came for those I had finished.

We conversed a long time by the stove, while he was drinking a cup of coffee which I made him take.

M. Rateau is a sensible man, who has observed much and speaks little; so that he has always something to say.

While looking over the accounts I had prepared for him his looks fell upon my journal, and I was obliged to acknowledge that in this way I wrote a diary of my actions and thoughts every evening for private use. From one thing to another, I began speaking to him of my dream the day before, and my reflections about the influence of outward objects upon our ordinary sentiments. He smiled.

"Ah! you too have my superstitions," he said quietly. "I have always believed, like you, that 'you may know the game by the lair:' it is only necessary to have tact and experience; but without

them we commit ourselves to many rash judgments. For my part, I have been guilty of this more than once, but sometimes I have also drawn a right conclusion. I recollect especially an adventure which goes as far back as the first years of my youth——"

He stopped. I looked at him as if I waited for his story, and he told it me at once.

At this time he was still but third clerk to an attorney at Orleans. His master had sent him to Montargis on different affairs, and he intended to return in the diligence the same evening, after having received the amount of a bill at a neighboring town ; but they kept him at the debtor's house, and when he was able to set out the day had already closed.

Fearing not to be able to reach Montargis in good time, he took a cross-road they pointed out to him. Unfortunately the fog increased, no star was visible in the heavens, and the darkness became so great that he lost his road. He tried to retrace his steps, passed twenty foot-paths, and at last found himself completely astray.

After the vexation of losing his place in the diligence, came the feeling of uneasiness as to his situation. He was alone, on foot, lost in a forest, without any means of finding his right road again, and with a considerable sum of money about him, for which he was responsible. His anxiety was increased by his inexperience. The idea of a forest was connected in his mind with so many adventures of robbery and murder that he expected some fatal encounter every instant.

To say the truth, his situation was not encouraging. The place was not considered safe, and for some time past there had been rumors of the sudden disappearance of several horse-dealers, though there was no trace of any crime having been committed.

Our young traveler, with his eyes staring forward and his ears listening, followed a footpath which he supposed might take him to some house or road; but woods always succeeded to woods. At last he perceived a light at a distance, and in a quarter of an hour he reached the high-road.

A single house, the light from which had attracted him, appeared at a little distance. He was going toward the entrace gate of the court-yard, when the trot of a horse made him turn his head. A man on horseback had just appeared at the turning of the road, and in an instant was close to him.

The first words he addressed to the young man showed him to be the farmer himself. He related how he had lost himself, and learned from the countryman that he was on the road to Pithiviers. Montargis was three leagues behind him.

The fog had insensibly changed into a drizzling rain, which was beginning to wet the young clerk through; he seemed afraid of the distance he had still to go, and the horseman, who saw his hesitation, invited him to come into the farm-house.

It had something of the look of a fortress. Surrounded by a pretty high wall, it could not be seen except through the bars of the great gate, which

was carefully closed. The farmer, who had got off his horse, did not go near it, but, turning to the right, reached another entrance closed in the same way, but of which he had the key.

Hardly had he passed the threshold when a terrible barking resounded from each end of the yard. The farmer told his guest to fear nothing, and showed him the dogs chained up to their kennels; both were of an extraordinary size, and so savage that the sight of their master himself could not quiet them.

A boy, attracted by their barking, came out of the house and took the farmer's horse. The latter began questioning him about some orders he had given before he left the house, and went toward the stable to see that they had been executed.

Thus left alone, our clerk looked about him.

A lantern which the boy had placed on the ground cast a dim light over the court-yard. All around seemed empty and deserted. Not a trace was visible of the disorder often seen in a country farm-yard, and which shows a temporary cessation of the work which is soon to be resumed again. Neither a cart forgotten where the horses had been unharnessed, nor sheaves of corn heaped up ready for threshing, nor a plow overturned in a corner and half-hidden under the freshly cut clover. The yard was swept, the barns shut up and padlocked. Not a single vine creeping up the walls; everywhere stone, wood, and iron!

He took up the lantern and went up to the corner

of the house. Behind was a second yard, where he heard the barking of a third dog, and a covered well was built in the middle of it.

Our traveler looked in vain for the little farm garden, where pumpkins of different sorts creep along the ground, or where the bees from the hives hum under the hedges of honeysuckle and elder. Verdure and flowers were nowhere to be seen. He did not even perceive the sight of a poultry-yard or pigeon-house. The habitation of his host was everywhere wanting in that which makes the grace, the life, and the charm of the country.

The young man thought that his host must be of a very careless or a very calculating disposition to concede so little to domestic enjoyments and the pleasures of the eye; and judging, in spite of himself, by what he saw, he could not help feeling a distrust of his character.

In the mean time the farmer returned from the stables and made him enter the house.

The inside of the farm-house corresponded to its outside. The whitewashed walls had no other ornament than a row of guns of all sizes; the massive furniture scarcely redeemed its clumsy appearance by its great solidity. The cleanliness was doubtful, and the absence of all minor conveniences proved that a woman's care was wanting in the household concerns. The young clerk learned that the farmer, in fact, lived here with no one but his two sons.

Of this, indeed, the signs were plain enough. A

table with a cloth laid, that no one had taken the trouble to clear away, was left near the window. The plates and dishes were scattered upon it without any order and loaded with potato-parings and half-picked bones. Several empty bottles emitted an odor of brandy, mixed with the pungent smell of tobacco-smoke.

After having seated his guest the farmer lit his pipe, and his two sons resumed their work by the fireside. Now and then the silence was just broken by a short remark, answered by a word or an exclamation; and then all became as mute as before.

"From my childhood," said the old cashier, "I had been very sensible to the impression of outward objects; later in life, reflection had taught me to study the causes of these impressions rather than to drive them away. I set myself, then, to examine everything around me with great attention.

"Below the guns, I had remarked on entering, some wolf-traps were suspended, and to one of them still hung the mangled remains of a wolf's paw, which they had not yet taken off from the iron teeth. The blackened chimney-piece was ornamented by an owl and a raven nailed on the wall, their wings extended, and their throats with a huge nail through each; a fox's skin, freshly flayed, was spread before the window; and a larder hook, fixed into the principal beam, held a headless goose, whose body swayed about over our heads.

"My eyes were offended by all these details, and I turned them again upon my hosts. The father,

who sat opposite to me, only interrupted his smoking to pour out his drink or address some reprimand to his sons. The eldest of these was scraping a deep bucket, and the bloody scrapings, which he threw into the fire every instant, filled the room with a disagreeable fetid smell; the second son was sharpening some butcher's knives. I learned from a word dropped from the father that they were preparing to kill a pig the next day.

"These occupations and the whole aspect of things inside the house told of such habitual coarseness in their way of living as seemed to explain, while it formed the fitting counterpart of, the forbidding gloominess of the outside. My astonishment by degrees changed into disgust, and my disgust into uneasiness. I cannot detail the whole chain of ideas which succeeded one another in my imagination; but, yielding to an impulse I could not overcome, I got up, declaring I would go on my road again.

"The farmer made some effort to keep me; he spoke of the rain, of the darkness, and of the length of the way. I replied to all by the absolute necessity there was for my being at Montargis that very night; and thanking him for his brief hospitality, I set off again in a haste which might well have confirmed the truth of my words to him.

"However, the freshness of the night and the exercise of walking did not fail to change the directions of my thoughts. When away from the objects which had awakened such lively disgust in me, I

felt it gradually diminishing. I began to smile at the susceptibility of my feelings, and then, in proportion as the rain became heavier and colder, these strictures on myself assumed a tone of ill temper. I silently accused myself of the absurdity of mistaking sensation for admonitions of my reason. After all, were not the farmer and his sons free to live alone, to hunt, to keep dogs, and to kill a pig? Where was the crime of it? With less nervous susceptibility, I should have accepted the shelter they offered me, and I should now be sleeping snugly on a truss of straw, instead of walking with difficulty through the cold and drizzling rain. I thus continued to reproach myself, until toward morning I arrived at Montargis, jaded and benumbed with cold.

"When, however, I got up refreshed, toward the middle of the next day, I instinctively returned to my first opinion. The appearance of the farm-house presented itself to me under the same repulsive colors which the evening before had determined me to make my escape from it. Reason itself remained silent when reviewing all those coarse details, and I was forced to recognize in them the indications of a low nature, or else the presence of some baleful influence.

"I went away the next day without being able to learn anything concerning the farmer or his sons, but the recollection of my adventure remained deeply fixed in my memory.

"Ten years afterward I was traveling in the

diligence through the department of the Loiret; I was leaning from the window and looking at some coppice ground now for the first time brought under cultivation, and the mode of clearing which one of my traveling companions was explaining to me, when my eyes fell upon a walled inclosure, with an iron-barred gate. Inside it I perceived a house with all the blinds closed, and which I immediately recollected; it was the farm-house where I had been sheltered. I eagerly pointed it out to my companion and asked who lived in it.

"'Nobody just now,' replied he.

"'But was it not kept, some years ago, by a farmer and his two sons?'

"'The Turreaus,' said my traveling companion, looking at me; 'did you know them?'

"'I saw them once.'

"He shook his head.

"'Yes, yes!' resumed he; 'for many years they lived there like wolves in their den; they merely knew how to till land, kill game, and drink. The father managed the house, but men living alone, without women to love them, without children to soften them, and without God to make them think of heaven, always turn into wild beasts, you see; so one morning the eldest son, who had been drinking too much brandy, would not harness the plow-horses; his father struck him with his whip, and the son, who was mad drunk, shot him dead with his gun.'"

16*th*, *P.M.*—I have been thinking of the story of

the old cashier these two days; it came so opportunely upon the reflections my dream had suggested to me.

Have I not an important lesson to learn from all this?

If our sensations have an incontestable influence upon our judgments, how comes it that we are so little careful of those things which awaken or modify these sensations? The external world is always reflected in us as in a mirror, and fills our minds with pictures which, unconsciously to ourselves, become the germs of our opinions and of our rules of conduct. All the objects which surround us are then, in reality, so many talismans from whence good and bad influences are emitted. It is for us to choose them wisely, so as to create a healthy atmosphere for our minds.

Feeling convinced of this truth, I set about making a survey of my attic.

The first object on which my eyes rest is an old map of the history of the principal monastery in my native province. I had unrolled it with much satisfaction and placed it on the most conspicuous part of the wall. Why had I given it this place? Ought this sheet of old worm-eaten parchment to be of so much value to me, who am neither an antiquary nor a scholar? Is not its real importance in my sight that one of the abbots who founded it bore my name, and that I shall, perchance, be able to make myself a genealogical tree of it for the edification of my visitors? While writing this I

feel my own blushes. Come, down with the map! let us banish it into my deepest drawer.

As I passed my glass, I perceived several visiting cards complacently displayed in the frame. By what chance, is it that there are only names that make a show among them? Here is a Polish count—a retired colonel—the deputy of my department. Quick, quick, into the fire with these proofs of vanity! and let us put this card in the handwriting of our office-boy, this direction for cheap dinners, and the receipt of the broker where I bought my last arm-chair in their place. These indications of my poverty will serve, as Montaigne says, *mater ma superbe*, and will always make me recollect the modesty in which the dignity of the lowly consists.

I have stopped before the prints hanging upon the wall. This large and smiling Pomona, seated on sheaves of corn, and whose basket is overflowing with fruit, only produces thoughts of joy and plenty; I was looking at her the other day, when I fell asleep denying such a thing as misery. Let us give her as companion this picture of Winter, in which everything tells of sorrow and suffering: one picture will modify the other.

And this Happy Family of Greuze's! What joy in the children's eyes! what sweet repose in the young woman's face! what religious feeling in the grandfather's countenance! May God preserve their happiness to them! but let us hang by its side the picture of this mother, who weeps over an

empty cradle. Human life has two faces, both of which we must dare to contemplate in their turns.

Let me hide, too, these ridiculous monsters which ornament my chimney-piece. Plato has said that "the beautiful is nothing else than the visible form of the good." If it is so, the ugly should be the visible form of the evil, and by constantly beholding it the mind insensibly deteriorates.

But above all, in order to cherish the feelings of kindness and pity, let me hang at the foot of my bed this affecting picture of the Last Sleep! Never have I been able to look at it without feeling my heart touched.

An old woman, clothed in rags, is lying by a roadside; her stick is at her feet, and her head rests upon a stone; she has fallen asleep; her hands are clasped; murmuring a prayer of her childhood, she sleeps her last sleep, she dreams her last dream!

She sees herself, again a strong and happy child, keeping the sheep on the common, gathering the berries from the hedges, singing, courtesying to passers-by, and making the sign of the cross when the first star appears in the heavens! Happy time, filled with fragrance and sunshine! She wants nothing yet, for she is ignorant of what there is to wish for.

But see her grown up; the time is come for working bravely: she must cut the corn, thresh the wheat, carry the bundles of flowering clover or branches of withered leaves to the farm. If her toil

is hard, hope shines like a sun over everything and it wipes the drops of sweat away. The growing girl already sees that life is a task; but she still sings as she fulfills it.

By and by the burden becomes heavier; she is a wife, she is a mother! She must economize the bread of to-day, have her eye upon the morrow, take care of the sick, and sustain the feeble; she must act, in short, that part of an earthly providence, so easy when God gives us his aid, so hard when he forsakes us. The woman is still strong, but she is anxious; she sings no longer!

Yet a few years, and all is overcast. The husband's health is broken; his wife sees him pine away by the now fireless hearth; cold and hunger finish what sickness had begun; he dies, and his widow sits on the ground by the coffin provided by the charity of others, pressing her two half-naked little ones in her arms. She dreads the future, she weeps, and she droops her head.

At last the future has come; the children are grown up, but they are no longer with her. Her son is fighting under his country's flag and his sister is gone. Both have been lost to her for a long time—perhaps forever; and the strong girl, the brave wife, the courageous mother is from henceforth but an aged beggar-woman, without a family and without a home! She weeps no more; sorrow has subdued her; she surrenders and waits for death.

Death, that faithful friend of the wretched, is

come: not hideous and with mockery, as superstition represents, but beautiful, smiling, and crowned with stars! The gentle phantom stoops to the beggar; its pale lips murmur a few airy words, which announce to her the end of her labors; a peaceful joy comes over the aged beggar-woman, and leaning on the shoulder of the great Deliverer, she has passed unconsciously from her last earthly sleep to her eternal rest.

Lie there, thou poor way-wearied woman! The leaves will serve thee for a winding-sheet, Night will shed her tears of dew over thee, and the birds will sing sweetly by thy remains. Thy visit here below will not have left more trace than their flight through the air; thy name is already forgotten, and the only legacy thou hast to leave is the hawthorn stick lying forgotten at thy feet!

Well! some one will take it up—some soldier of that great human host which is scattered abroad by misery or by vice; for thou art not an exception, thou art an instance; and under the same sun which shines so pleasantly upon all, in the midst of these flowering vineyards, this ripe corn, and these wealthy cities, entire generations suffer, succeed each other, and still bequeath to each the beggar's stick!

The sight of this sad picture shall make me more grateful for what God has given me, and more compassionate for those whom he has treated with less indulgence; it shall be a lesson and a subject for reflection for me.

Ah! if we would watch for everything that might improve and instruct us; if the arrangements of our daily life were so disposed as to be a constant school for our minds! but oftenest we take no heed of them. Man is an eternal mystery to himself; his own person is a house into which he never enters and of which he studies the outside alone. Each of us need have continually before him the famous inscription which once instructed Socrates, and which was engraved on the walls of Delphi by an unknown hand:

"KNOW THYSELF."

CHAPTER XII.

THE END OF THE YEAR.

December 30th, P.M.—I was in bed, and hardly recovered from the delirious fever which had kept me for so long between life and death. My weakened brain was making efforts to recover its activity; my thoughts, like rays of light struggling through the clouds, were still confused and imperfect; at times I felt a return of the dizziness which made a chaos of all my ideas, and I floated, so to speak, between alternate fits of mental wandering and consciousness.

Sometimes everything seemed plain to me, like the prospect which, from the top of some high mountain, opens before us in clear weather. We distinguish water, woods, villages, cattle, even the cottage perched on the edge of the ravine; then suddenly there comes a gust of wind laden with mist, and all is confused and indistinct.

Thus, yielding to the oscillations of a half-recovered reason, I allowed my mind to follow its various impulses without troubling myself to separate the real from the imaginary; I glided softly from one to the other, and my dreams and

waking thoughts succeeded closely upon one another.

Now, while my mind is wandering in this unsettled state, see, underneath the clock which measures the hours with its loud ticking, a female figure appears before me!

At first sight I saw enough to satisfy me that she was not a daughter of Eve. In her eye was the last flash of an expiring star, and her face had the pallor of an heroic death-struggle. She was dressed in a drapery of a thousand changing colors of the brightest and the most somber hues, and she held a withered garland in her hand.

After having contemplated her for some moments, I asked her name and what brought her into my attic. Her eyes, which were following the movements of the clock, turned toward me, and she replied:

"You see in me the year which is just drawing to its end; I come to receive your thanks and your farewell."

I raised myself on my elbow in surprise, which soon gave place to bitter resentment.

"Ah! you want thanks," cried I; "but first let me know what for.

"When I welcomed your coming I was still young and vigorous: you have taken from me each day some little of my strength, and you have ended by inflicting an illness upon me; already, thanks to you, my blood is less warm, my muscless less firm, and my feet less agile than before! You have

planted the germs of infirmity in my bosom; there, where the summer flowers of life were growing, you have wickedly sown the nettles of old age!

"And, as if it was not enough to weaken my body, you have also diminished the powers of my soul: you have extinguished her enthusiasm; she is become more sluggish and more timid. Formerly her eyes took in the whole of mankind in their generous survey; but you have made her near-sighted, and now she scarcely sees beyond herself!

"That is what you have done for my spiritual being: then as to my outward existence, see to what grief, neglect, and misery you have reduced it!

"For the many days that the fever has kept me chained to this bed, who has taken care of this home, in which I placed all my joy? Shall I not find my closets empty, my bookcase stripped, all my poor treasures lost through negligence or dishonesty? Where are the plants I cultivated, the birds I fed? All are gone! my attic is despoiled, silent, and solitary!

"As it is only for the last few moments that I have returned to a consciousness of what surrounds me, I am even ignorant who has nursed me during my long illness! Doubtless some hireling, who will leave when all my means of recompense are exhausted!

"And what will my masters, for whom I am bound to work, have said to my absence? At this time of the year, when business is most pressing,

can they have done without me, will they even have tried to do so? Perhaps I am already superseded in the humble situation by which I earned my daily bread! And it is thou—thou alone, wicked daughter of Time—who has brought all these misfortunes upon me: strength, health, comfort, work—thou hast taken all from me. I have only received outrage and loss from thee, and yet thou darest to claim my gratitude!

"Ah! die then, since thy day is come; but die despised and cursed; and may I write on thy tomb the epitaph the Arabian poet inscribed upon that of a king:

"'Rejoice, thou passer-by: he whom we have buried here cannot live again.'"

. . . . . .

I was awakened by a hand taking mine; and opening my eyes, I recognized the doctor.

After having felt my pulse, he nodded his head, sat down at the foot of the bed, and looked at me, rubbing his nose with his snuff-box. I have since learned that this was a sign of satisfaction with the doctor.

"Well! so we wanted old snub-nose to carry us off?" said M. Lambert, in his half-joking, half-scolding way. "What the deuce of a hurry we were in! It was necessary to hold you back with both arms at least!"

"Then you had given me up, doctor?" asked I, rather alarmed.

"Not at all," replied the old physician. "We

can't give up what we have not got; and I make it a rule never to have any hope. We are but instruments in the hands of Providence, and each of us should say with Ambroise Paré: 'I tend him, God cures him!'"

"May he be blessed then, as well as you," cried I; "and may my health come back with the new year!"

M. Lambert shrugged his shoulders.

"Begin by asking yourself for it," resumed he bluntly. "God has given it you, and it is your own sense, and not chance, that must keep it for you. One would think, to hear people talk, that sickness comes upon us like the rain or the sunshine, without one having a word to say in the matter. Before we complain of being ill we should prove that we deserve to be well."

I was about to smile, but the doctor looked angry.

"Ah! you think that I am joking," resumed he, raising his voice; "but tell me, then, which of us gives his health the same attention that he gives to his business? Do you economize your strength as you economize your money? Do you avoid excess and imprudence in the one case with the same care as extravagance or foolish speculations in the other? Do you keep as regular accounts of your mode of living as you do of your income? Do you consider every evening what has been wholesome or unwholesome for you, with the same care as you bring to the examination of your expenditure? You may

smile; but have you not brought this illness on yourself by a thousand indiscretions?"

I began to protest against this, and asked him to point out these indiscretions. The old doctor spread out his fingers and began to reckon upon them one by one.

"*Primo*," cried he, "want of exercise. You live here like a mouse in a cheese, without air, motion, or change. Consequently, the blood circulates badly, the fluids thicken, the muscles, being inactive, do not claim their share of nutrition, the stomach flags, and the brain grows weary.

"*Secundo.* Irregular food. Caprice is your cook; your stomach a slave who must accept what you give it, but who presently takes a sullen revenge, like all slaves.

"*Tertio.* Sitting up late. Instead of using the night for sleep, you spend it in reading; your bedstead is a bookcase, your pillow a desk! At the time when the wearied brain asks for rest, you lead it through these nocturnal orgies, and you are surprised to find it the worse for them the next day.

"*Quarto.* Luxurious habits. Shut up in your attic, you insensibly surround yourself with a thousand effeminate indulgences. You must have list for your door, a blind for your window, a carpet for your feet, an easy-chair stuffed with wool for your back, your fire lit at the first sign of cold, and a shade to your lamp; and, thanks to all these precautions, the least draught makes you catch cold,

common chairs give you no rest, and you must wear spectacles to support the light of day. You have thought you were acquiring comforts, and you have only contracted infirmities.

"*Quinto*——"

"Ah! enough, enough, doctor!" cried I. "Pray do not carry your examination further; do not attach a sense of remorse to each of my pleasures."

The old doctor rubbed his nose with his snuff-box.

"You see," said he more gently, and rising at the same time, "you would escape from the truth. You shrink from inquiry—a proof that you are guilty. *Habemus confitentem reum!* But at least, my friend, do not go on laying the blame on Time, like an old woman."

Thereupon he again felt my pulse and took his leave, declaring that his function was at an end and that the rest depended upon myself.

When the doctor was gone I set about reflecting upon what he had said.

Although his words were too sweeping, they were not the less true in the main. How often we accuse chance of an illness, the origin of which we should seek in ourselves! Perhaps it would have been wiser to let him finish the examination he had begun.

But is there not another of more importance—that which concerns the health of the soul? Am I so sure of having neglected no means of preserving that during the year which is now ending? Have

I, as one of God's soldiers upon earth, kept my courage and my arms efficient? Shall I be ready for the great review of souls which must pass before HIM WHO IS in the dark valley of Jehoshaphat?

Darest thou examine thyself, O my soul! and see how often thou hast erred?

First, thou hast erred through pride! for I have not duly valued the lowly. I have drunk too deeply of the intoxicating wines of genius, and have found no relish in pure water. I have disdained those words which had no other beauty than their sincerity; I have ceased to love men solely because they are men—I have loved them for their endowments; I have contracted the world within the narrow compass of a pantheon, and my sympathy has been awakened by admiration only. The vulgar crowd, which I ought to have followed with a friendly eye because it is composed of my brothers in hope or grief, I have let pass by me with as much indifference as if it were a flock of sheep. I am indignant with him who rolls in riches and despises the man poor in worldly wealth; and yet, vain of my trifling knowledge, I despise him who is poor in mind—I scorn the poverty of intellect as others do that of dress; I take credit for a gift which I did not bestow on my myself, and turn the favor of fortune into a weapon with which to attack others.

Ah! if, in the worst days of revolutions, ignorance has revolted and raised a cry of hatred against genius, the fault is not alone in the envious malice

of ignorance, but comes in part, too, from the contemptuous pride of knowledge.

Alas! I have too completely forgotten the fable of the two sons of the magician of Bagdad.

One of them, struck by an irrevocable decree of destiny, was born blind, while the other enjoyed all the delights of sight. The latter, proud of his own advantages, laughed at his brother's blindness and disdained him as a companion. One morning the blind boy wished to go out with him.

"To what purpose," said he, "since the gods have put nothing in common between us? For me creation is a stage, where a thousand charming scenes and wonderful actors appear in succession; for you it is only an obscure abyss, at the bottom of which you hear the confused murmur of an invisible world. Continue then alone in your darkness, and leave the pleasures of light to those upon whom the day-star shines."

With these words he went away, and his brother, left alone, began to cry bitterly. His father, who heard him, immediately ran to him, and tried to console him by promising to give him whatever he desired.

"Can you give me sight?" asked the child.

"Fate does not permit it," said the magician.

"Then," cried the blind boy eagerly, "I ask you to put out the sun!"

Who knows whether my pride has not provoked the same wish on the part of some one of my brothers who does not see?

But how much oftener have I erred through levity and want of thought! How many resolutions have I taken at random! how many judgments have I pronounced for the sake of a witticism! how many mischiefs have I not done without any sense of my responsibility! The greater part of men harm one another for the sake of doing something. We laugh at the honor of one and compromise the reputation of another, like an idle man who saunters along a hedgerow, breaking the young branches and destroying the most beautiful flowers.

And nevertheless it is by this very thoughtlessness that the fame of some men is created. It rises gradually, like one of those mysterious mounds in barbarous countries to which a stone is added by every passer-by: each one brings something at random and adds it as he passes, without being able himself to see whether he is raising a pedestal or a gibbet. Who will dare look behind him, to see his rash judgments held up there to view?

Some time ago I was walking along the edge of the green mound on which the Montmartre telegraph stands. Below me, along one of the zigzag paths which wind up the hill, a man and a girl were coming up, and arrested my attention. The man wore a shaggy coat, which gave him some resemblance to a wild beast; and he held a thick stick in his hand, with which he described various strange figures in the air. He spoke very loud, and in a voice which seemed to me convulsed with passion. He raised his eyes every now and then with an ex-

pression of savage harshness, and it appeared to me that he was reproaching and threatening the girl, and that she was listening to him with a submissiveness which touched my heart. Two or three times she ventured a few words, doubtless in the attempt to justify herself; but the man in the great-coat began again immediately with his loud and angry voice, his savage looks, and his threatening evolutions in the air. I followed him with my eyes, vainly endeavoring to catch a word as he passed, until he disppeared behind the hill.

I had evidently just seen one of those domestic tyrants whose sullen tempers are excited by the patience of their victims, and who, though they have the power to become the beneficent gods of a family, choose rather to be their tormentors.

I cursed the unknown savage in my heart, and I felt indignant that these crimes against the sacred peace of home could not be punished as they deserve, when I heard his voice approaching nearer. He had turned the path, and soon appeared before me at the top of the slope.

The first glance and his first words explained everything to me: in place of what I had taken for the furious tones and terrible looks of an angry man and the attitude of a frightened victim, I had before me only an honest citizen, who squinted and stuttered, but who was explaining the management of silk-worms to his attentive daughter.

I turned homeward, smiling at my mistake; but before I reached my faubourg I saw a crowd run-

ning, I heard calls for help, and every finger pointed in the same direction to a distant column of flame. A manufactory had taken fire, and everybody was rushing forward to assist in extinguishing it.

I hesitated. Night was coming on; I felt tired; a favorite book was awaiting me: I thought there would be no want of help, and I went on my way.

Just before I had erred from want of consideration; now it was from selfishness and cowardice.

But what! have I not on a thousand other occasions forgotten the duties which bind us to our fellow-men? Is this the first time I have avoided paying society what I owe it? Have I not always behaved to my companions with injustice, and like the lion? Have I not claimed successively every share? If any one is so ill advised as to ask me to return some little portion, I get provoked, I am angry, I try to escape from it by every means. How many times, when I have perceived a beggar sitting huddled up at the end of the street, have I not gone out of my way, for fear that compassion would impoverish me by forcing me to be charitable! How often have I doubted the misfortunes of others, that I might with justice harden my heart against them! With what satisfaction have I sometimes verified the vices of the poor man, in order to show that his misery is the punishment he deserves!

Oh! let us not go further—let us not go further! I interrupted the doctor's examination, but how much sadder is this one! We pity the diseases of the body; we shudder at those of the soul.

I was happily disturbed in my reverie by my neighbor, the old soldier.

Now I think of it, I seem always to have seen, during my fever, the figure of this good old man, sometimes leaning against my bed and sometimes sitting at his table surrounded by his sheets of pasteboard.

He has just come in with his glue-pot, his quire of green paper, and his great scissors. I called him by his name; he uttered a joyful exclamation and came near me.

"Well! so the bullet is found again!" cried he, taking my two hands into the maimed one which was left him; "it has not been without trouble, I can tell you: the campaign has been long enough to win two clasps in. I have seen no few fellows with the fever batter windmills during my hospital days: at Leipsic, I had a neighbor who fancied a chimney was on fire in his stomach, and who was always calling for the fire-engines; but the third day it all went out of itself. But with you it has lasted twenty-eight days—as long as one of the Little Corporal's campaigns."

"I an not mistaken, then; you were near me?"

"Well! I had only to cross the passage. This left hand has not made you a bad nurse for want of the right; but, bah! you did not know what hand gave you drink, and it did not prevent that beggar of a fever from being drowned—for all the world like Poniatowski in the Elster."

The old soldier began to laugh, and I, feeling too

much affected to speak, pressed his hand against my breast. He saw my emotion and hastened to put an end to it.

"By the bye, you know that from to-day you have a right to draw your rations again," resumed he gayly; "four meals, like the German *meinherrs*—nothing more! The doctor is your house steward."

"We must find the cook, too," replied I, with a smile.

"She is found," said the veteran.

"Who is she?"

"Genevieve."

"The fruit-woman?"

"While I am talking she is cooking for you, neighbor; and do not fear her sparing either butter or trouble. As long as life and death were fighting for you, the honest woman passed her time in going up and down stairs to learn which way the battle went. And, stay, I am sure this is she."

In fact, we heard steps in the passage, and he went to open the door.

"Oh, well!" continued he, "it is Mother Millot, our portress, another of your good friends, neighbor, and whose poultices I recommend to you. Come in, Mother Millot—come in; we are quite bonny boys this morning, and ready to step a minuet if we had our dancing-shoes."

The portress came in, quite delighted. She brought my linen, washed and mended by herself, with a little bottle of Spanish wine, the gift of her sailor son, and kept for great occasions. I would

have thanked her, but the good woman imposed silence upon me, under the pretext that the doctor had forbidden me to speak. I saw her arrange everything in my drawers, the neat appearance of which struck me; an attentive hand had evidently been there, and day by day put straight the unavoidable disorder consequent on sickness.

As she finished, Genevieve arrived with my dinner; she was followed by Mother Denis, the milkwoman over the way, who had learned, at the same time, the danger I had been in, and that I was now beginning to be convalescent. The good Savoyard brought me a new-laid egg, which she herself wished to see me eat.

It was necessary to relate minutely all my illness to her. At every detail she uttered loud exclamations; then, when the portress warned her to be less noisy, she excused herself in a whisper. They made a circle around me to see me eat my dinner; each mouthful I took was accompanied by their expressions of satisfaction and thankfulness. Never had the King of France, when he dined in public, excited such admiration among the spectators.

As they were taking the dinner away, my colleague, the old cashier, entered in his turn.

I could not prevent my heart beating as I recognized him. How would the heads of the firm look upon my absence and what did he come to tell me?

I waited with inexpressible anxiety for him to speak; but he sat down by me, took my hand, and began rejoicing over my recovery, without saying a

word about our masters. I could not endure this uncertainty any longer.

"And the Messieurs Durmer," asked I hesitatingly, "how have they taken—the interruption to my work?"

"There has been no interruption," replied the old clerk quietly.

"What do you mean?"

"Each one in the office took a share of your duty; all has gone on as usual, and the Messieurs Durmer have perceived no difference."

This was too much. After so many instances of affection, this filled up the measure. I could not restrain my tears.

Thus the few services I had been able to do for others had been acknowledged by them a hundredfold! I had sown a little seed, and every grain had fallen on good ground and brought forth a whole sheaf. Ah! this completes the lesson the doctor gave me. If it is true that the diseases, whether of the mind or body, are the fruit of our follies and our vices, sympathy and affection are also the rewards of our having done our duty. Every one of us, with God's help and within the narrow limits of human capability, himself makes his own disposition, character, and permanent condition.

. . . . . .

Everybody is gone; the old soldier has brought me back my flowers and my birds, and they are my only companions. The setting sun reddens my half-

closed curtains with its last rays. My brain is clear and my heart lighter. A thin mist floats before my my eyes, and I feel myself in that happy state which precedes a refreshing sleep.

Yonder, opposite the bed, the pale goddess in her drapery of a thousand changing colors, and with her withered garland, again appears before me; but this time I hold out my hand to her with a grateful smile.

"Adieu, beloved year! whom I but now unjustly accused. That which I have suffered must not be laid to thee; for thou wast but a tract through which God had marked out my road—a ground where I had reaped the harvest I had sown. I will love thee, thou wayside shelter, for those hours of happiness thou hast seen me enjoy; I will love thee even for the suffering thou hast seen me endure. Neither happiness nor suffering came from thee; but thou hast been the scene for them. Descend again, then, in peace, into eternity, and be blest, thou who hast left me experience in the place of youth, sweet memories instead of past time, and gratitude as payment for good offices."

THE END.

IN THE CHIMNEY CORNER.

BY

ÉMILE SOUVESTRE.

TRANSLATED BY

A. W. AYER AND H. T. SLATE.

TO THE READER.

Apart from the direct lessons that experience teaches us, there are others for which our imagination is entirely responsible. We learn not only by what we see, but by what we imagine, and fables teach as many lessons as facts.

Ideal pictures of life called apologues, poems, novels, according to people and period, have always played an important part in the instruction of the world. In the Middle Ages tales of chivalry told by firelight completed the education of the knights and damosels; in these *fabliaux* was given the solution of all the problems of love or chivalry then being discussed; by imaginary examples they educated the mind to recognize what it should choose; in fact, they caused the romantic to unite with this home training of the character, the only training that endures throughout the temptations of life and constitutes the spirit of a nation.

In our day, when printing has taken the place of oral tradition and has become the real instructor of the world, the press, under another name and with another purpose, continues to play the *rôle* of the minstrels of the Middle Ages; it is from the press that the family demands romantic tales to shorten leisure hours. These tales told beneath green arbors in the last rays of the setting sun, or in the chimney

corner during the long winter evenings, have become at once a habit and a bond of union. Thanks to this common nourishment, minds develop together and acquire the same temperament, so to speak. By dint of associating in fancy we become accustomed to associate in fact.

> Ne vous souvient-il plus, mon fils, de ces soirées
> Où, l'œil fixé sur vous et nos chaises serrées,
> Ravis, nous écoutions quelque récit frappant
> Que vous lisiez tout haut, en vous interrompant?
> Nous sentions s'allumer en nous les mêmes flammes
> En prenant en commun ce doux repas des âmes;
> Mêmes pleurs, mêmes ris, mêmes pensers! Alors
> Parmi nous s'exhalaient de merveilleux accords,
> Et, vibrant dans nos seins à la même secousse,
> La lyre interieure élevait sa voix douce!
> Oh! comme l'on s'aimait dans ces soirs d'abandon!
> Quand ils n'irritent pas, les pleurs rendent si bon!
> Alors, mon fils, nos cœurs n'avaient qu'une racine,
> De tous vos sentiments je savais l'origine,
> Et, nous tenant la main, dans le monde idéal
> Ensemble nous marchions toujours d'un pas égal.

Even when the difference in natures does not permit this union, some enlightenment is gained by each; the variety of sensations reveals the character of each; each is enabled to know the other better and, consequently, to avoid painful collisions.

But the choice of books is difficult! This family reading assumes something of an official character; it is an act of domestic magistracy, the responsibility of which falls upon the head of the family

and requires great discretion. Moreover, the human mind has its tyrannies and its reserves. One book, which delights or moves us when we read it to ourselves, would lose its charm if we heard it read aloud! Now it is a subtle perfume that can be breathed only in solitude, now emotions that touch us so deeply that we are embarrassed by the looks of a third person, now pictures too vivid to be easily contemplated by more than one. Domestic intimacy has its own reservations; it does not permit anything to be read that it does not allow to be said. Moreover, the lack of universal leisure necessitates short stories; people like to carry away with them a complete impression which may serve as a subject for reflection. It is difficult to read long books and it is apt to lead to encroachments upon one's duties, and then the ideal, instead of elevating the real, ends by destroying it.

As to the character of ordinary novels, it is even more unsuited to family reading. While some authors imitate "Amadis de Gaule" and never emerge from great passions or from great adventures; while others, mindful of the real world, but obliged at all cost to rouse sated interest, seek in the unusual pictures that attract; the most powerful writers enter the very heart of man and society and unveil their somber depths before us!

For each of them there is doubtless some reason for existence; but whatever verdict we may pass upon their creations, we must at least admit that they are not suited to the need above noted. Below

these great dramas there is the familiar drama ; far removed from the clamorous celebrities that weary the press is the humble writer who does not seek to go beyond the domestic circle: it is for the former to shine, for the latter to be loved!

The tales that follow are only an attempt, but perhaps they will serve as an initiative. Among so many delightful story-tellers, whose voices ring a little false in shouting amid the crowd, there may be some who will weary at last of the turmoil called fame; they will come to sit under the home roof and, lowering their voices to the tone of truth, they will let us hear some of those tales that are eternally touching because eternally true. Then the author of the "Romans de Famille" will hold his peace without regret, to give place to those who are more worthy, and will resume his seat among the listeners.

THE POET AND THE PEASANT.

A YOUNG man was skirting the forest that separates Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines from Ribauvillé, and in spite of the approach of night, in spite of the mist that grew denser every moment, he was walking slowly, paying no heed either to the weather or to the hour.

His dress of green cloth, his buckskin gaiters, and the gun slung across his shoulder might have caused him to be taken for a sportsman, had not the book that half-protruded from his game-bag betrayed the dreamer, for whom the pursuit of game was only an excuse for solitude. At this very moment the meditative unconcern of his bearing contradicted his sportsmanlike appearance, and proved that Arnold de Munster was less occupied with observing the track of wild game than with following in all their windings the vagaries of his mind.

For some moments the latter had been filled with thoughts of his family and of the friends he had left in Paris. He remembered the studio that he had adorned with fantastic engravings, strange

paintings, curious statuettes; the German songs that his sister had sung, the melancholy verses that he had repeated in the subdued light of the evening lamps, and the long talks in which every one confessed his inmost feelings, in which all the mysteries of thought were discussed and translated into impassioned or graceful words! Why had he abandoned these choice pleasures to bury himself in the country? Was necessity a sufficient excuse for this sort of deterioration? Would it not have been better to face a loss of money rather than this prosaic provincial existence? What would become of the young man's delicate and refined nature in the midst of the vulgar minds that surrounded him?

As he put these and many other questions to himself, Arnold de Munster had walked on without noticing the way he was taking. He was aroused at last from his meditations by the consciousness that the mist had changed into rain and was beginning to penetrate his shooting-coat. He was about to quicken his steps, but in looking around him he saw that he had lost his way in the intricacies of the forest, and he tried vainly to determine the direction he must take. A first attempt only succeeded in bewildering him still more. The daylight faded, the rain fell more heavily, and he continued to plunge at random into unknown paths.

He had begun to be discouraged, when the sound of bells reached him through the leafless trees. A cart driven by a big man in a blouse had appeared

at an intersecting road and was coming toward the one that Arnold had just reached.

Arnold stopped to wait for the man and asked him if he were far from Sersberg.

"Sersberg!" repeated the carter; "you don't expect to sleep there to-night?"

"Pardon me, but I do," answered the young man.

"At the Château de Sersberg?" went on his interlocutor; "you'll have to go by train, then! It is six good leagues from here to the gate; and considering the weather and the roads, they are equal to twelve."

The young man uttered an exclamation. He had left the château that morning and did not think that he had wandered so far; but the peasant saw from his explanation that he had been on the wrong path for hours, and that in thinking to take the road to Sersberg he had continued to turn his back upon it. It was too late to make good such an error: the nearest village was a league distant and Arnold did not know the way; so he was forced to accept the shelter offered by his new companion, whose farm was fortunately within gunshot.

He accordingly regulated his pace to the carter's and attempted to enter into conversation with him; but Moser was not a talkative man and was apparently a complete stranger to the young man's usual sensations. When, on issuing from the forest, Arnold pointed to the magnificent horizon purpled by the last rays of the setting sun, the farmer contented himself with a grimace.

"Bad weather for to-morrow," he muttered, drawing about his shoulders the *limousine* that served him as a cloak.

"One ought to be able to see the entire valley from here," went on Arnold, striving to pierce the gloom that already clothed the foot of the mountain.

"Yes, yes," said Moser, shaking his head; "the ridge is high enough for that. There's an invention for you that isn't good for much."

"What invention?"

"Eh, *parbleu!* the mountains."

"You would rather have everything level?"

"*Tiens!* what a question!" cried the farmer, laughing. "You might as well ask me if I would not rather ruin my horses."

"True," said Arnold in a tone of somewhat contemptuous irony. "I had forgotten the horses! It is clear that God should have thought principally of them when he created the world."

"I don't know as to God," answered Moser quietly, "but the engineers certainly made a mistake in forgetting them when they made the roads. The horse is the laborer's best friend, monsieur—without disrespect to the oxen, which have their value too."

Arnold looked at the peasant.

"So you see in your surroundings only the advantage you can derive from them?" he asked gravely. "The forest, the mountains, the clouds, all say nothing to you? You have never paused before the setting sun or at the sight of the woods lighted by the stars?"

"I?" cried the farmer. "Do you take me for a maker of almanacs? What should I get out of your starlight and the setting sun? The main thing is to earn enough for three meals a day and to keep one's stomach warm. Would monsieur like a drink of *kirschwasser?* It comes from the other side of the Rhine."

He held out a little wicker-covered bottle to Arnold, who refused by a gesture. The positive coarseness of the peasant had rekindled his regret and his contempt. Were they really men such as he was, these unfortunates, doomed to unceasing labor, who lived in the bosom of nature without heeding it and whose souls never rose above the most material sensations? What was the world of poetry, to which the young man owed his greatest happiness, to this pitiful portion of the human race? Led by the halter of instinct, did it not seem condemned to browse outside of the Eden whose gates a privileged nature had opened to him? It seemed to lead the same life as himself, but what a gulf between their souls! Had they even a few tastes in common? Was there one point of resemblance which could attest their original brotherhood? Arnold doubted this more and more each moment. The more he pondered the more this immaterial flower of all things, to which we have given the name of poetry, seemed to him the privilege of a chosen few, while the rest vegetated at random within the limits of prose.

These thoughts had the effect of communicating

to his manner a sort of contemptuous indifference toward his conductor, to whom he ceased to talk. Moser showed neither surprise nor pain and set to whistling an air, interrupted from time to time by some brief word of encouragement to his horses.

Thus they arrived at the farm, where the noise of the bells announced their coming. A young boy and a woman of middle age appeared on the threshold.

"Ah, it is the father!" cried the woman, looking back into the house, where could be heard the voices of several children, who came running to the door with shouts of joy and pressed around the peasant.

"Wait a moment, youngsters," interrupted the father in his big voice as he rummaged in the cart and brought forth a covered basket. "Let Fritz unharness."

But the children continued to besiege the farmer, all talking at once. He bent to kiss them, one after another; then rising suddenly:

"Where is Jean?" he asked with a quickness that had something of uneasiness in it.

"Here, father, here," answered a shrill little voice from the farm-house door; "mother doesn't want me to go out in the rain."

"Stay where you are," said Moser, throwing the traces on the backs of the horses; "I will go to you, *filiot*. Go in, the rest of you, so as not to tempt him to come out."

The three children went back to the doorway, where little Jean was standing beside his mother.

He was a poor little creature, so cruelly deformed that at the first glance one could not have told his age or the nature of his infirmity. His whole body, distorted by sickness, formed a curved, not to say a broken line. His disproportionately large head was sunken between two unequally rounded shoulders, while his body was sustained by two little crutches; these took the place of the shrunken legs, which could not support him.

At the farmer's approach he held out his thin arms with an expression of love that made Moser's furrowed face brighten. The father lifted him in his strong arms with an exclamation of tender delight.

"Come!" he cried, "hug your father—with both arms—hard! How has he been since yesterday?"

The mother shook her head.

"Always the cough," she answered in a low tone.

"It's nothing, father," the child answered in his shrill voice. "Louis had drawn me too fast in my wheeled chair; but I am well, very well; I feel as strong as a man."

The peasant placed him carefully on the ground, set him upon his little crutches, which had fallen, and looked at him with an air of satisfaction.

"Don't you think he's growing, wife?" he asked in the tone of a man who wishes to be encouraged. "Walk a bit, Jean; walk, boy! He walks more quickly and more strongly. It'll all come right, wife; we must only be patient."

The farmer's wife made no reply, but her eyes

turned toward the feeble child with a look of despair so deep that Arnold trembled; fortunately Moser paid no heed.

"Come, the whole brood of you," he went on, opening the basket he had taken from the cart; "here is something for every one! In line and hold out your hands."

The peasant had displayed three small white rolls glazed in the baking: three cries of joy burst forth simultaneously and six hands advanced to seize the rolls, but they all paused as at a word of command.

"And Jean?" asked the childish voices.

"To the devil with Jean," answered Moser gayly; "there is nothing for him to-night. Jean shall have his share another time."

But the child smiled and tried to get up to look into the basket. The farmer stepped back a pace, took off the cover carefully, and lifting his arm with an air of solemnity, displayed before the eyes of all a cake of gingerbread garnished with almonds and pink and white sugar-plums.

There was a general shout of admiration. Jean himself could not restrain a cry of delight; a slight flush rose to his pale face and he held out his hands with an air of joyful expectancy.

"Ah, you like it, *petite taupe!*" cried the peasant, whose face was radiant at the sight of the child's pleasure; "take it, *mon vieux*, take it; it is nothing but sugar and honey."

He placed the gingerbread in the hands of the little

hunchback, who trembled with happiness, watched him hobble off, and turning to Arnold when the sound of the crutches was lost in the house, said with a slight break in his voice:

"He is my eldest. Sickness has deformed him a little, but he's a shrewd fellow and it only depends upon us to make a gentleman of him."

While speaking he had crossed the first room on the ground-floor and led his guest into a species of dining-room, the whitewashed walls of which were decorated only with a few rudely colored prints. As he entered, Arnold saw Jean seated on the floor and surrounded by his brothers, among whom he was dividing the cake given him by his father. But each one objected to the size of his portion and wished to lessen it; it required all the little hunchback's eloquence to make them accept what he had given them. For some time the young sportsman watched this dispute with singular interest, and when the children had gone out again he expressed his admiration to the farmer's wife.

"It is quite true," she said with a smile and a sigh, "that there are times when it seems as though it were a good thing for them to see Jean's infirmity. It is hard for them to give up to each other, but not one of them can refuse Jean anything; it is a constant exercise in kindness and devotion."

"*Tiens!* great virtue, that!" interrupted Moser. "Who could refuse anything to such a poor, afflicted little innocent? It's a silly thing for a man to say; but, look you, monsieur, that child there

always makes me want to cry. Often when I am at work in the fields, I begin all at once to think about him. I say to myself Jean is ill! or Jean is dead! and then I have to find some excuse for coming home to see how it is. Then he is so weak and so ailing! If we did not love him more than the others, he would be too unhappy."

"Yes," said the mother gently, "the poor child is our cross and our joy at the same time. I love all my children, monsieur, but whenever I hear the sound of Jean's crutches on the floor, I always feel a rush of happiness. It is a sign that the good God has not yet taken our darling away from us. It seems to me as though Jean brought happiness to the house just like swallows' nests fastened to the windows. If I hadn't him to take care of, I should think there was nothing for me to do."

Arnold listened to these naïve expressions of tenderness with an interest that was mingled with astonishment. The farmer's wife called a servant to help set the table; and at Moser's invitation, the young man approached the brushwood fire which had been rekindled.

As he was leaning against the smoky mantelpiece, his eye fell upon a small black frame that inclosed a withered leaf. Moser noticed it.

"Ah! you are looking at my relic. It's a leaf of the weeping-willow that grows down there on the tomb of *l'Ancien!** I got it from a Strasbourg

* Napoleon.

merchant who had served in the *Vieille.** I wouldn't part with it for a hundred crowns."

"Then there is some particular sentiment attached to it?"

"Sentiment, no," answered the peasant; "but I too was discharged from the Fourth Regiment of Hussars, a brave regiment, monsieur, which made a strange showing at Montmirail! There were only eight men left of our squadron, so when the Little Corporal passed in front of the line he saluted us—yes, monsieur, raised his hat to us! *Tonerre!* That was something to make us ready to die to the last man, look you. Ah! he was the father of the soldier!"

Here the peasant began to fill his pipe, looking the while at the black frame and the withered leaf. In this reminder of a marvelous destiny there was evidently for him a whole romance of youth, emotion, and regret. He recalled the last struggles of the Empire, in which he had taken part, the reviews held by the emperor, when his mere presence aroused confidence in victory; the passing successes of France's famous campaign, so soon expiated by the disaster at Waterloo; the departure of the vanquished general and his long agony on the rock of St. Helena. All these pictures in succession crossed the farmer's mind, his brow became furrowed, his thumb pressed more heavily upon the pipe that had long been filled, and he whistled through his teeth a march of his old regiment.

* Old Guard.

Arnold respected the old soldier's silent preoccupation and waited until he should resume the conversation.

The arrival of supper roused him from his reverie; he drew up a chair for his guest and took his place at the opposite side of the table.

"Come! fall to on the soup," he cried brusquely. "I have had nothing since morning but two swallows of *kirschwasser*. I could eat an ox whole to-night."

To prove his words, he began to empty the huge porringer of soup before him.

For several moments nothing was heard but the clatter of spoons followed by that of the knives cutting up the flitch of bacon served by the farmer's wife. His walk and the fresh air had given Arnold himself an appetite that made him forget his Parisian daintiness. Moser's bacon seemed to have an unknown savor and his wine qualities that led Arnold to eat that he might drink better and to drink that he might eat better. The supper grew gayer and gayer, when all at once the peasant raised his head.

"And Farraut?" he asked. "I have not seen him since my return."

His wife and the children looked at each other without answering.

"Well, what is it?" went on Moser, who saw their embarrassment. "Where is the dog? What has happened to him? Why don't you answer, Dorothée?"

"Don't be angry, father," interrupted Jean; "we

didn't dare tell you, but Farraut went away and has not come back."

"*Mille diables!* You should have told me!" cried the peasant, striking the table with his fist. "What road did he take?"

"The road to Garennes."

"When was it?"

"After dinner: we saw him go up the little path."

"Something must have happened to him," said Moser, getting up. "The poor animal is almost blind and there are sand pits all along the road! Go fetch my sheepskin and the lantern, wife. I must find Farraut, dead or alive."

Dorothée went out without making any remark either about the hour or the weather, and soon reappeared with what her husband had asked of her.

"You must think a great deal of this dog," said Arnold, surprised at such zeal.

"It is not I," answered Moser, lighting his pipe; "but he did good service to Dorothée's father. One day when the old man was on his way home from Poutroye with the price of his oxen in his pocket, four men tried to murder him for his money, and they would have done it if it had not been for Farraut; so when the good man died two years ago, he called me to his bedside and asked me to care for the dog as for one of his children—those were his words. I promised, and it would be a crime not to keep one's promise to the dead. *Hé!* Fritz, give me my iron-shod stick. I wouldn't

have anything happen to Farraut for a pint of my blood. The animal has been in the family for twenty years—he knows us all by our voices —and he recalls the grandfather. I shall see you again, monsieur, and good-night until to-morrow."

Moser wrapped himself in his sheepskin and went out. They could hear the sound of his iron-shod stick die away in the soughing of the wind and the falling of the rain.

After awhile the farmer's wife offered to conduct Arnold to his quarters for the night, but Arnold asked permission to await the return of the master of the house, if his return were not delayed too long. His interest in the man who had at first seemed to him so vulgar, and in the humble family whose existence he had thought to be so valueless, continued to increase.

The vigil was prolonged, however, and Moser did not return. The children had fallen asleep one after another, and even Jean, who had held out the longest, had to seek his bed at last. Dorothée, uneasy, went incessantly from the fireside to the door and from the door to the fireside. Arnold strove to reassure her, but her mind was excited by suspense. She accused Moser of never thinking of his health or of his safety; of always being ready to sacrifice himself for others; of being unable to see a human being or an animal suffer without risking all to relieve it; and as she went on with her complaint, which sounded strangely like a glorifi-

cation, her fears grew more vivid ; she had a thousand gloomy forebodings. The dog had howled all through the previous night; an owl had perched upon the roof of the house ; it was a Wednesday, always an unfortunate day in the family. Her fears reached such a pitch at last that the young man volunteered to go in search of her husband, and she was about to waken Fritz to accompany him, when the sound of footsteps was heard outside.

"It is Moser !" said the peasant woman, stopping short.

"*Holà ! hé !* open quickly wife," cried the farmer from without.

She ran to draw the bolt, and Moser appeared, carrying in his arms the old blind dog.

"Here he is," he said gayly. "God help me ! I thought I should never find him : the poor brute had rolled to the bottom of the big stone quarry."

"And you went there to get him ?" asked Dorothée, horror-stricken.

"Should I have left him at the bottom to find him drowned to-morrow ?" asked the old soldier. "I slid down the length of the big mountain and I carried him up in my arms like a child : the lantern was left behind, though."

"But you risked your life, you miserable man !" cried Dorothée, who was shuddering at her husband's explanation.

The latter shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah, bah !" he said with careless gayety ; "who risks nothing has nothing ; I have found Farraut—

that's the principal thing. If the grandfather sees us from up there, he ought to be satisfied."

This reflection, made in an almost indifferent tone, touched Arnold, who held out his hand impetuously to the peasant.

"What you have done was prompted by a good heart," he said with feeling.

"What? Because I have kept a dog from drowning?" answered Moser. "*Pardieu!* dogs and men —thank God I have helped more than one out of a hole since I was born; but I have sometimes had better weather than to-night to do it in. Say, wife, there must be a glass of cognac left; bring the bottle here; there is nothing that dries you better when you're wet."

Dorothée brought the bottle to the farmer, who drank to his guest's health, and then each sought his bed.

The next morning the weather was fine again; the sky was clear and the birds, shaking their feathers, sang on the still dripping trees.

When he descended from the garret, where a bed had been prepared for him, Arnold found near the door Farraut, who was warming himself in the sun, while little Jean, seated on his crutches, was making him a collar of eglantine berries. A little further on, in the first room, the farmer was clinking glasses with a beggar who had come to collect his weekly tithe; Dorothée was holding his wallet, which she was filling.

"Come, old Henry, one more draught," said the

peasant, refilling the beggar's glass; "if you mean to finish your round you must take courage."

"That one always finds here," said the beggar with a smile; "there are not many houses in the parish where they give more, but there is not one where they give with such good will."

"Be quiet, will you, Père Henriot?" interrupted Moser; "do people talk of such things? Drink and let the good God judge each man's actions. You, too, have served; we are old comrades."

The old man contented himself with a shake of the head and touched his glass to the farmer's; but one could see that he was more moved by the heartiness that accompanied the alms than the alms themselves.

When he had taken up his wallet again and bade them good-by, Moser watched him go until he had disappeared around a bend in the road. Then drawing a loud breath, he said, turning to his guest:

"One more poor old man without a home. You may believe me or not, monsieur, but when I see men with shaking heads going about like that, begging their bread from door to door, it turns my blood. I should like to set the table for them all and touch glasses with them all as I did just now with Père Henri. To keep your heart from breaking at such a sight, you must believe that there is a world up there where those who have not been summoned to the ordinary here will receive double rations and double pay."

"You must hold to that belief," said Arnold; "it

will support and console you. It will be long before I shall forget the hours I have passed in your house, and I trust they will not be the last."

"Whenever you choose," said the old soldier; "if you don't find the bed up there too hard and if you can digest our bacon come at your pleasure, and we shall always be under obligations to you."

He shook the hand that the young man had extended, pointed out the way that he must take, and did not leave the threshold until he had seen his guest disappear in the turn of the road.

For some time Arnold walked with lowered head, but upon reaching the summit of the hill he turned to take a last backward look, and seeing the farmhouse chimney, above which curled a light wreath of smoke, he felt a tear of tenderness rise to his eye.

"May God always protect those who live under that roof!" he murmured; "for where pride made me see creatures incapable of understanding the finer qualities of the soul, I have found models for myself. I judged the depths by the surface and thought poetry absent because, instead of showing itself without, it hid itself in the heart of the things themselves; ignorant observer that I was, I pushed aside with my foot what I thought were pebbles, not guessing that in these rude stones were hidden diamonds."

THE SCULPTOR OF THE BLACK FOREST.

It is impossible to travel through the duchy of Baden without being impressed by the peaceful and at the same time savage aspect of the country. There is no other country, perhaps, where the contrasts are more happily combined. It is all harmonious and effective, like a vast park of which God has been the designer and where he has brought together all the beauties of nature.

But it is on the outskirts of the Black Forest that the scenery is especially impressive. There the valleys that extend to the Rhine narrow all at once and end by being nothing but clefts in the rock, barely giving passage to the small horses of the manufacturers of *kirschwasser*. Seen from a height, they form a huge triangle whose base borders the river and whose apex joins the mountain in a narrow path.

The grass in these valleys, watered by warm mineral springs, grows to the height of grain, always undulating and dotted with more flowers than a botanist could classify in a day ; a carpet of velvet and silk stretched at the edge of the forest.

The latter covers the hills, about which it winds, forming a thousand spirals of verdure, and stopping short of the highest summits, which here and there raise their bald and snow-whitened heads.

It was between two of these hills at the bottom of one of the narrow gorges where the valleys ended that there lived some years ago a young man called Herman Cloffer, whose story the old men still repeat to their children. We give it here, not as it is told in the mountains, but as we heard it from the pastor at Badenwiller, with all its details and all its moral; for the pastor had loved Herman from his childhood, and on his death-bed the young man had made him his confidant.

Herman was the son of a schoolmaster. His father had given him some instruction: he knew a little Latin, played the violin, and spoke French quite fluently; so he came to be known in the country as Maister Cloffer.

Being occupied from childhood with wood-carving, as were all the mountaineers, he had gradually acquired a taste for the work and had come to carve children's toys with considerable skill; but a trip to Bâle, where he saw some Gothic wainscoting, was a revelation to him. He understood what art was and what human patience could accomplish. From that moment his vocation was decided upon. Leaving in Bâle the toys to which he had once devoted himself, he began to carve in wood everything that struck his eye, studying the smallest details, finishing only to begin again, and beginning

again only to finish again ; in short, leaving nothing incomplete and working with a fervent love for the work and for it alone.

This conscientious application was not long in having its result. His attempts, at first confused and faulty, became more true to nature, more clear, more bold ; the difficulties of execution disappeared to give place to the difficulties of art. Soon Herman had no longer to strive for form, but for action ; the science had been acquired it now remained to prove his genius.

Then began for the young man that struggle between the sentiment that wishes to express itself and in ertmatter that resists : a struggle so full of joy when it is successful and the work of creation accomplished !

One would have said, indeed, that the wood obeyed Herman's every conception ; he seemed to mold and fashion it by the simple contact of his thought. Occupied solely with his work, wishing to produce it as perfect as he imagined it, he lost himself in it completely, he quickened it with his desires. Nothing that he did was the result of a combination or of a system, but of an impression ; he understood art as the visible expression of a human soul face to face with nature.

His carvings, originally confounded with the rude work of the forest herdsmen, ended by attracting attention. There was a demand for them from Baden at first, then from Munich, Vienna, Berlin. The dealer who had bought the first at a miserable

sum urged the young man to supply him with more, promising to pay him a better price.

Herman, who since his father's death had been his mother's sole support, was happy to see that by his work he could assure her a peaceful old age. Indeed, an unaccustomed ease soon began to make itself felt in the hut: they were able to add a few modest bits of furniture to the humble household, renovate the holiday wardrobe, and sometimes in the evenings, when their neighbors came in, to offer them a dish of *kneft* and a bottle of Rhine wine. At such times Herman would take up his violin and accompany his mother, who sang in a voice still resonant old Swabian airs or some of Schiller's ballads, which the schoolmaster had taught her.

Thus Cloffer's days were divided between work and quiet pleasures: he left all money matters to Dorothée. Free from all material care, his life was one continual and fruitful meditation; nothing drew him from his ideal world but the simple pleasures of the neighborhood and family affection. He could give himself up completely to the delights of creating, talk long and familiarly with his genius. Two-thirds of his time was devoted to its sole inspiration, and absorbed in art as the saints in pious contemplation, he felt none of the buffetings of real life.

One summer evening as he was seated at the door of his hut, smoking his meerschaum pipe and holding on his knees his violin, from which he

occasionally drew a few vague strains, a horseman turned suddenly into the path.

He was a stranger, of about forty, and his dress and bearing showed him to be a man of the world. He drew rein a few paces from the hut and looked about him with an eyeglass; at last his glance fell upon the young man.

"Ah, here is what I am looking for," he exclaimed in French, and coming forward:

"Can you tell me where I can find Herman the sculptor?" he asked in almost unintelligible German.

"I am he," answered Cloffer, rising.

"You!" cried the stranger. "*Pardieu!* that's a coincidence!"

And dismounting from his horse, he tossed the reins to a servant in livery who had joined him.

"I was looking for you, maister," he went on easily. "I am a Frenchman—you doubtless guessed as much from my German—and a collector. I have seen your carvings. I have come to buys ome."

Herman led him into the hut.

"Is this where you work? asked the Frenchman, casting a surprised glance about the smoky room.

"Near that window," answered Cloffer.

And he showed the stranger a long table upon which lay several finished carvings. Beneath the table were piled rough-hewn blocks of pine; his few tools were hung upon the wall.

"What! You have no other work-room?"

"No, monsieur."

The collector raised his glass to his right eye.

"Marvelous!" he murmured; "such masterpieces in this hole. But, Maister Herman—that is what they call you, I believe—you lack everything here: you have no stimulus, no advisers."

"I try to reproduce what I see as I feel it," answered Cloffer simply; "here are goats copied from nature, a bull and a child——"

"Charming!" interrupted the stranger, taking the two carvings which Herman handed to him; "such delicacy, such a touch—I will buy them. Your price?"

Herman mentioned it.

"Done," answered the Frenchman, who seemed amazed at the lowness of the price; "but, my dear maister, do you know I have moved heaven and earth to find you? The dealers who sell your work in Germany either don't know your name or conceal it, and I could not discover the Jew who buys from you at first hand. I had to apply to our ambassador at Vienna, who caused the police to make inquiries. In short, I learned your name, and as I was passing through Badenwiller I wished to see you."

Herman bowed.

"You have no idea of the reputation you already have in Germany," went on the stranger; "people fight over your carvings. I saw some in M. de Metternich's study. You do not intend to remain here, of course?"

"Excuse me, monsieur," Herman answered, "I have no idea of leaving the forest."

"What! But that means giving up your future; think of vegetating here forever!"

"I am happy here, monsieur."

"Happy!" repeated the stranger, staring through his eyeglass at Herman's rough dress; "that proves that you are a philosopher, my dear maister: but you haven't even a studio here. Think of sculpturing three paces from a fire-place where bacon and sauerkraut are cooked! No one but a German could lead such a life."

"What should I gain by changing it?" asked Herman.

"Fame, first of all! So far your work is known, but not your name. You must take your place, my dear maister; above all, you must make your fortune."

"Make my fortune!" repeated Cloffer in astonishment; "by what means?"

"Why, *pardieu*, by your toys," cried the Frenchman. "Don't you know that nowadays our artists live like young men of good family? You must profit by the progress of the century, Herman; you must come to Paris! I will introduce you to a set of journalists who will make a Michael Angelo in miniature of you; before two years are up you will have a groom and a tilbury."

"Is it possible?"

"It is certain, and since chance has brought us together, I want you to profit by it. Light will not remain hidden under a bushel; believe me——come to Paris."

"I cannot think of it," murmured the sculptor, shaking his head.

"Why not?"

"I have my habits, my friends, above all my mother——"

"In Paris you will find something to take the place of all these."

"No, no."

"Reflect, I beg of you," went on the Frenchman, who in trying to convince Cloffer had convinced himself; "reflect that here you will always live as a peasant. You remind me of a prince brought up in exile, ignorant that a crown awaits him elsewhere; it is this crown that I have come to offer you. You are asked only to renounce your old dress, your old roof, and you are promised riches, success! You are not a German for nothing; you are fond of the theater and of champagne, I suppose; you shall have all that, maister, in exchange for your small beer. Make up your mind, then, and I will take you with me in my post-chaise."

Herman was about to answer, but he trembled suddenly and stopped; his eyes had just met Dorothée's.

She had entered a few moments before, and although she did not understand French, her mother's eye had divined from Herman's agitation that something extraordinary was passing.

"What is the stranger saying to you?" she asked in German.

"He is telling me about his country, mother," answered Cloffer.

"And he proposes that you should go there, perhaps?"

Herman gave a sign of assent.

"Remember that those who love you live here," said the old woman quickly.

"I shall not forget it," answered Herman.

"Well?" asked the Frenchman, who had tried in vain to understand.

"I cannot leave my mother, monsieur," answered Cloffer gravely.

And as the stranger was about to insist:

"My mind is made up," he went on brusquely; "nothing will change it."

The Frenchman made a movement of his shoulders.

"As you will, maister," he said, "but you are sacrificing your fortune."

Then he added:

"I left some ladies at Badenwiller, as they were too tired to come with me. They will buy all you have left. Would you not like to take the carvings to the ladies yourself? We still have time to get there for dinner."

Cloffer consented after some hesitation.

It was late when he returned; the strangers had kept him to dinner at the hotel. His mother tried to question him, but he answered her shortly and in a tone of suppressed impatience.

The following morning he went to work dejectedly and did not speak the entire day. It was easy to see that his soul was no longer filled with

that contentment that formerly found expression in words. Dorothée hoped that his sadness would be only temporary and neglected no means of dissipating it.

But a great revolution was going on within the young sculptor. As long as he had seen no one but his friends and neighbors, he had allowed himself to live as they did, without ambition, confining his desires to the simple pleasures with which he was familiar and imagining nothing beyond. The appearance and the words of the stranger had transformed him.

He had at first listened to his account as to the fairy tales that had delighted him as a child; but the ladies whom he had seen at the hotel had confirmed all that their companion had said: one of them had done more, she had offered herself as an example. A few years ago, poor as Herman was then, she owed to her singing the wealth with which he saw her surrounded; and by this wealth the young sculptor had been dazzled.

The thought that he himself could attain to it made his brain whirl. In vain I know not what wise instinct whispered to him to fly from these illusive temptations; all the bad passions, so long dormant, were roused within him, singing in chorus like the witches in Macbeth: "Thou shalt be rich, thou shalt be famous!" and Herman was ready to yield to these intoxicating promises.

It was not long before he became indifferent to what had once delighted him: the picture of Paris

interposed itself between him and all things; it was like a fatal shadow that prevented the sun of happiness from reaching him. He worked abstractedly, began a thousand sketches, finishing none of them and finding distaste in everything.

His health began to suffer from these new preoccupations, and a slow fever began to undermine it. Until then his mother had kept silent, but when she saw him fall into this languor, more dangerous than despair, she hesitated no longer.

"May God forgive these strangers for what they have done, Herman!" she said. "They came here, like the serpent into the earthly paradise, to tempt you to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But the evil is done, my son, and you cannot remain here. Go, since we can no longer make you happy."

Cloffer tried to protest, but the old woman had not spoken until she had made the sacrifice in her own heart. She removed all obstacles with the ingenious ease God gives only to mothers and that self-abnegation that women show us without being able to teach us. The preparations were completed in a few days. Dorothée herself washed Herman's linen, mended his clothes, and saw to all the details, so that it would be a long time before he should feel the need of her. She had given him the greater part of her savings and advised him not to economize them, but to deprive himself of nothing.

"What I keep with me is yours like the rest," she added. "Be happy if you can; I have no other wish."

Herman accepted all this care and forethought with gratitude, but at the same time with a joy that wrung his mother's heart. Since it had been decided that he should go to Paris he had regained his health; he talked more loudly, sang incessantly, and worked with ardor. He did not wish to arrive in the great city with empty hands, and he expended all his art on a group of children, which he meant to show as a proof of his skill.

At last the day of departure arrived: the separation was heart-rending. Herman twice laid down his staff, declaring that he would not go; but his mother overcame her own anguish that she might give him courage.

The novelty of scene and the stir of travel soon created a diversion in the young man's thoughts. As he went further from his native place, regret gave place to curiosity. On foot, his blackthorn staff in his hand and on his shoulders his leathern knapsack, he hastened on faster and faster, asking every night what distance still separated him from Paris. The way seemed hopelessly long, but he felt neither fatigue nor *ennui;* strengthened by impatience, he walked on without stopping, communing all the time with his hopes. Whenever a handsome carriage drawn by a fast horse passed him, he said to himself:

"I too shall soon be traveling like that."

Whenever his eyes were attracted by a country house partly hidden among the acacias, he murmured;

"A little while longer and I shall have one like it."

And thus he went on joyously, taking possession, in the future, of all that pleased his eye or aroused his desires.

At last, after twenty days of journeying, he saw before him a confused mass that hid the horizon and above which floated a cloud of vapor; it was Paris.

The stranger on taking leave of him at Badenweiler had given his address to Herman, urging him to make use of it if he should ever decide to come to Paris. The young sculptor, immediately upon his arrival, hastened to the Rue Saint-Lazare, where M. de Riol had his apartments.

The latter uttered an exclamation of amazement at the sight of Cloffer.

"You here, maister!" he cried. "Has the mountain slid into your valley? Have the charcoal-burners of your forest burned down your hut? Or are you a fugitive for political reasons?"

"My hut is still in its place," answered Herman, smiling, "and the duke has no more faithful subject than I am."

"So you are in Paris voluntarily?"

"Voluntarily."

"And what has worked this miracle?"

"Your words, monsieur."

The Frenchman looked with surprise at the young German, who proceeded to explain all that had passed.

"So," went on De Riol when Herman had finished, "so, my dear maister, you have come to Paris to make your fortune?"

"I have come to make myself known."

"That's what I mean; we will help you do it."

"Indeed, I rely upon your advice and upon your protection."

"You are right; but first of all I want you to see our famous artists. I shall have several of them here to-morrow; come and dine with us and bring some of your work."

"Agreed."

"Until to-morrow, then, but late; for we dine here at the time you have supper in your Germany."

"Until to-morrow at seven."

"That's right."

They shook hands and separated.

Herman employed a part of the day in seeking a lodging. He then strolled through the public gardens, admiring the statues and pausing in ecstasy before the monuments.

The following day he was at De Riol's at the hour indicated and found his friend surrounded by a dozen or so young men to whom he was introduced.

He had brought with him his group of children, which aroused general admiration; one artist declared that there were touches of Benvenuto and Goujon combined; a sculptor compared Herman to Dominiquin; and a journalist who was present came to press his hand, declaring that on the following day he would proclaim him in his *feuilleton* as the Canova of the Black Forest.

Then they sat down to table and the conversation turned almost exclusively upon painting and sculpture. Herman was profoundly astonished at what he heard said on these subjects. All the guests complained of the decadence of art and of the bad taste of the public, which forced them to follow a wrong path. If the old masters had been so great and they themselves were so little, it was to be attributed, they said, to the difference of the times. Nowadays genius was misunderstood, talent impossible! And all repeated in chorus in melancholy tones as they emptied their long glasses, where the champagne was frothing: "Art is dying! Art is dead!"

As to the causes of this decadence, some accused civilization, others the constitutional government, some the newspapers.

"Themselves are the only ones they won't accuse," said the journalist in an undertone, bending toward Herman; "they do not suspect that, after all, public taste is formed by what is given it, and that if it has degenerated they must blame themselves alone, because it is for them to shape and guide it. You believe, perhaps, that all these fine talkers are worshipers of art; but not one of them would be willing to be a Correggio upon condition of having to work and die as he did. What kills art is that no one lives for it or with it; it is because all of us, whatever we are, have more vanity or ambition than enthusiasm and because we look not for the beautiful, but for the useful."

After dinner they returned to the saloon, where

Herman's group was again examined and praised; but all regretted that the young sculptor had not chosen a different subject. Children were no longer in fashion; there had been two or three successes in this field that forbade the treatment of the same subject. For the moment public taste was in favor of subjects of the Middle Ages, and Herman was advised to depict some scene taken from the old ballads of his country.

"That surprises you," remarked the journalist with a smile.

"It does, indeed," said Cloffer. "I had thought that what gave value to a work was its perfection."

"That is an idea of the Black Forest, my dear maister; we are more advanced here. What gives value to a work is not its merit, but its opportuneness. Ten years ago an artist made his reputation by painting a little hat on a rock the shape of a cheese: the picture was absurd, but responded to the fancy of the moment, and we ask no more."

"So it is not art one must study, but the caprices of the public?"

"As you say, maister. Painters, sculptors, writers are only sellers of novelties; if the fashion takes, their fortune is made; if not, they try a new one."

"Ah, that is not what I had understood," murmured Herman.

And he returned to his hotel discouraged.

M. de Riol, however, was true to his promise: he introduced the young German everywhere; he

brought him into contact with collectors and dealers who gave him numerous orders. Herman had never been so rich, but he paid for these riches with his liberty. He was told what subjects he was to treat—a programme was made out for him. It was a species of torture as painful as it was novel. Hitherto he had followed all the impulses of his fancy, transferring with his chisel the impressions of the moment, creating, without knowing it, what he felt, what he saw, and seeking in his work only the joy of perfect expression of what was in him. Like the wild bird, he had become accustomed to have the range of the entire heavens, and now they left him only a narrow and fixed circle. No more capricious attempts, nothing unexpected, no freedom, and therefore no happiness. The inspiration was succeeded by the sense of the task, and for the first time he learned that distaste could be found in work.

One morning as Cloffer was engaged in finishing a statuette that had been ordered from him, the journalist whom he had met at De Riol's entered his room.

Charles Duvert brought the review in which the promised article had just appeared.

"I don't know whether you will be pleased with it," he said, "but it has made a sensation."

"I am anxious to know what you can have found to say about a poor carver of wood like me," answered Herman, opening the paper.

"I think I have posed you pretty well," observed Duvert.

"I cannot understand how."

"Read."

Cloffer approached the window and began to read the article. It was a fantastic study in which, under the pretext of analyzing the talent of the unknown artist, the writer made of his life a romance full of marvelous circumstances as new to Herman as they were to the public. Charles Duvert noticed the young German's astonishment.

"I was sure of it, maister," he cried, laughing. "There is a biography such as you never expected. I have made of you a hero after the pattern of Hoffmann."

"Indeed," answered Herman, wounded, "I cannot imagine the reason for it."

"The reason, my great man, is the folly of the world, which likes fairy tales only. An artist whose life is like everybody's else would not pique curiosity; he must have his story. If I were to make my *début* over again, I should proclaim myself as a Gaspard Hauser or an Orinoco savage rather than the son of my father. You remember Paganini's success? Very well; of the crowds that flocked after him scarcely a third went to hear him; the rest went to see the man whose strange adventures had filled the *feuilletons* and whose genius, it was said, was the result of a compact with Satan."

"So lying," said Herman, amazed, "is the first condition of glory."

"No, but of celebrity, maister. Glory has no need of all this noise, but goes to the great man in his

obscure corner or even in the tomb. She would have passed through your Black Forest some day, to-morrow perhaps, perhaps in a hundred years, and she would have written your name on her great tablets; but here it is a question only of success and of fortune. We do in art as we do in business, and the first condition for every tradesman is to have a sign that will attract the purchaser. You will soon see the effect of my article."

At this point the hotel porter entered, announcing that M. Lorieux wished to see the young sculptor.

"Lorieux!" repeated Duvert; "what did I say? He has read the paper and has come to give you a commission."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it. But depend upon it, the more you ask him the greater will be his faith in your talents."

The dealer was introduced. He had, indeed, come to make a business proposal to Herman, but he seemed to be struck by the modest furnishings of the room where the young sculptor worked. He looked coldly upon the statuettes that Herman showed him. Duvert observed this.

"I am sorry that you should show these here, maister," he said to Herman; "the day is bad and one cannot judge of the delicacy of the work. If monsieur will come to the studio——"

"Ah, the maister has a studio?" asked the dealer.

"It is being made ready for him; that is why

you find him camped in a hotel. But in a few days he will have the finest quarters of any sculptor in Paris; a real Italian gallery overlooking a garden; 3,000 francs rent! Our artists nowadays live like grand seigneurs."

"And it is we who are their bankers," remarked the dealer with a loud laugh.

"Say their money-lenders, monsieur, their stewards. In passing through your hands their works enrich you. But, excuse me, maister—you know who is waiting for you; settle with monsieur quickly, I beg of you."

All this was said with such briskness and assurance that Cloffer was bewildered. The dealer, whose whole manner had been altered by these remarks, hastened to make to Herman proposals which the latter accepted, and retired with great demonstrations of politeness.

Hardly had he vanished when Duvert threw himself into a chair with a shout of laughter.

"*Pour Dieu!* what does this jest mean and what have you been saying to him?" asked Cloffer.

"It isn't a joke," answered the journalist, "because if you haven't the studio I told him of, you must have it."

"What?"

"Didn't you see the impression your hotel room made upon that honest tradesman? Seeing you so poorly lodged, he was on the point of not making you an offer."

"But what had my lodging to do with it as long as he saw my work?"

"*Mon Dieu!* maister, you are really too much of a German. Don't you understand that to be able to judge of the work one must have more knowledge and taste than that man has? Moreover, what does M. Lorieux care for merit? What he wants is a sculptor who is in vogue, whose productions he can sell well; and the artist's wealth is the best proof of his success. You still forget, Herman, that you are no longer in the Black Forest, working according to your fancy, but in Paris, where you work at the pleasure of others."

"Alas! you are right," said Cloffer, sighing.

"You have an apprenticeship to serve," went on Duvert. "Neither can you continue to live in solitude. You must be seen in society; one evening in certain saloons will do more for your reputation than a masterpiece."

"So," said Herman, "it is not enough to have lost the right to follow my inspiration, but I must also give up the right to live according to my tastes?"

"You must succeed," answered Duvert; "it's all in that. In future you must have but one thought and one object: make yourself talked about."

Cloffer tried to follow Duvert's advice and he was not long in finding out its correctness. In a few months his reputation increased beyond all expections, and the value of his works increased accordingly.

Duvert's article had been accepted as a biographical sketch; the young German's name was heard

on every side in connection with the romantic circumstances of his life; he was pointed out at first nights at the theater; his habits and opinions were repeated in detail.

Herman let himself drift on on this pleasant tide of fashion, which lifted him up without his having any need to aid himself. All the instincts of pride that had hitherto remained dormant in his soul awoke insensibly. The world talked so loudly of his genius that he ended by believing in it and accepting the universal admiration as homage that was due to him.

Unfortunately, as always, his success had aroused keen enmity. Until then he had known only the sweetness of success; he was not long in feeling the bitterness.

An article published in a newspaper unfriendly to the one upon which Duvert worked began the attack with an analysis of Herman's works. The majority of those he had executed since his coming to Paris lacked that naïveté that had rendered the first so priceless. Hampered in his inspiration, obeying the necessity of gain, constantly distracted by the demands of society, he had worked rapidly and without heart. They reproached him for it with hypocritical regret; they pointed out, one after another, the faults in these hasty creations, stigmatizing with the name of greed the sentiment that had produced them.

These accusations cut Herman to the heart. His enemies doubtless learned this and renewed their

attacks every month, every week, every day. Soon the young sculptor could not cast his eyes upon certain sheets without finding his name coupled with some offensive epigram. Ridiculous actions and speeches were attributed to him; caricatures of him were held up to public ridicule.

Herman, maddened by such persecution, wished to avenge himself; Duvert calmly protested that this was one side of success. Why should he be surprised that the same means employed by his friends to make him famous should be used by his enemies to make him ridiculous? This was an inevitable result of fame; but Herman was too unused to the custom that exposes the work and the person of the artist to the mercy of the critics to accept any such conclusion. He felt, moreover, that there was at the bottom of the raillery that pursued him an exaggerated but just reproach. Jealousy had rendered his enemies clear-sighted, and they struck at the sensitive part of his conscience.

Cloffer struggled for a long time in vain against the attacks of the gnats that tormented him; in vain he tried to forget the persecution to which he was exposed; his soul, accustomed to the peace that comes from obscurity, was too deeply disturbed; he fell into a profound melancholy, followed by a sickness to which he nearly succumbed. It needed all the skill of the physicians and several months of convalescence to bring him back to life. De Riol persuaded him to take a trip to Italy, which completed his recovery.

When he returned he had regained his strength, and the long idleness to which he had been perforce condemned had given him an ardent longing for work; but when he presented himself to the dealers the latter scarcely recognized him. There had come from Florence a worker in terra-cotta and the fashion had veered toward that quarter.

Herman went to see Duvert, whom he told of this change. The journalist shrugged his shoulders.

"What would you have, maister?" he said. "Success is like fortune—you must seize it by the forelock; six months of absence are enough to make a man forgotten. You were wrong to go."

"But my health required it."

"A man who is the fashion has no right to be ill; society is a *mêlée*, and whoever drops out of the ranks, even for an hour, finds his place filled on his return.

"But cannot I regain my position?"

Duvert shook his head.

"Your face and your name are known; your gift has lost its novelty; you cannot count in future upon that inquisitive interest that in society takes the place of admiration; you are already spoken of as if you were dead."

"It is horrible!" cried Herman. "What! a year has been enough to deprive me of——"

"All that a year has been enough to give you."

"But what is to become of me?"

"You have only to choose, my dear maister; you

can become a painter, a poet, or a comedian; that will be a transformation, and perhaps public favor will return to you."

Herman made no reply and left the journalist. He could not yet believe that the latter had not exaggerated, but he soon recognized the truth of all he had said.

After being accustomed to the intoxication of success, he was forced to meet again with the rebuffs to which he had grown unaccustomed, accept all the pain and all the shame of oblivion.

These trials were too much for Herman's strength. He struggled for a time; but one day, after a fresh rebuff even more palpable than the rest, he hurried to his studio, summoned a dealer, sold off everything, paid what he owed, and taking the blackthorn stick, which he had hung above his door as a trophy:

"Enough of humiliation," he murmured; "let us go back to the forest."

He left Paris by the same *barrière* by which he had entered four years before; but, alas! all the hopes that he had brought with him had vanished; enthusiastic, young, and strong when he had come, he left despairing, aged, and mortally stricken.

The way was painful for him. Enervated by Parisian life, he had lost the habit of taking long walks in the sunshine; he no longer felt within him that joyous strength that loves to expend itself in the open air; and more than once he was forced to halt in order to rest. He took advantage of one of these stops to prepare his mother for his return.

One can imagine Dorothée's joy upon receiving this letter, which preceded Herman by only a few hours. But her joy was soon tempered at the sight of the change that had taken place in her son. She easily understood by his pallor and his melancholy abstraction that his plans had failed and that his return was due less to affection than to despair. She did not ask a single question, however. As he threw himself into her arms he had said:

"I have come back to you, mother, and I shall never leave you again."

This was enough; she busied herself in doing all she could that her son might recover at her side the peace of mind he had lost.

Gathering about Herman, with the ingenuity of a woman and a mother, all that he had once loved, she had a separate room furnished for him, asked her old friends to visit him, and got the young girls of the neighborhood to pass their evenings at his fireside. Thus every day became a *fête* day at Dorothée's house. But Herman did not notice it. What was all this to the world in which he had moved? He compared the obscurity into which he had relapsed to the brilliance that had one instant surrounded him. His soul had lost its simplicity at the same time that it had lost its calm, and, disabused of the false joys of the world, he was unable to return to the simple joys of home.

Dorothée finally saw that all her efforts were in vain. Herman grew each day more sad, more ailing. His malady soon made such progress that he

could not leave the hut. The poor, frightened mother hurried in search of the doctor.

The latter examined the young man closely, questioned him, prescribed rest, diversion, and took his leave. Dorothée hastened after him.

"You say nothing, monsieur?" she faltered, looking with anguish at the doctor.

He seemed embarrassed.

"The truth, in God's name," went on the distracted mother.

"The truth?" stammered the physician.

"I wish to know it."

"Very well! I am going to notify the pastor."

Dorothée uttered a cry and fell upon her knees.

The following day the pastor came, under the pretext of ordering some work from Herman, but the young man smiled sadly. Feeling the progress of the disease, he had understood what had brought the pastor. He opened his heart to him and told him all that we have told. When he had finished, the pastor tried to offer some consolation, but Herman interrupted him.

"My malady is cured, monsieur," he said with emotion. "On the point of death, the truth has come to me: all that has happened is just. I wished to exchange the immaterial delights of art for the advantages of fortune and the vanities of fame; I have sacrificed my affections and my peace to an ambitious delirium; sooner or later I had to suffer for my mistake. If it could only serve as a lesson! If some one else tempted by vain promises should

wish to leave our valleys for the great cities, tell him my story, monsieur; tell him what success costs without making one happier or better; tell him, lastly, to train his heart and mind with a view not to profit, but to duty; for joy here on earth is only for simple souls."

THE DESIRES.

ANTOINE LIREUX, the tenant of Jonchères, was standing before his house, examining its thatched roof with a troubled air.

"There's the moss showing on the ridge pole again," he muttered. "The stuff will be over everything and the granaries will be damp as cellars; but the townsfolk think it's quite good enough for peasants."

"Whom do you mean by townsfolk, my good man?" inquired a voice behind him.

The farmer turned abruptly and found himself face to face with M. Favrol, who had heard his discontented reflections. The peasant saluted his landlord with a somewhat disconcerted air.

"I didn't know the master was there," he said, without replying to his interlocutor's question.

"But you were thinking of him, were you not?" answered M. Favrol, smiling. "I see that you will always be the same, my poor Antoine, seeing nothing but thorns in roses and nothing but vexations in life."

Lireux shook his head.

"It is easy for the master to talk," he said doggedly; "he is rich enough to do as he pleases."

"Because I please to do only what I can," remarked the landlord; "but to limit one's desires to one's means is a precept that was forgotten in your catechism, perhaps."

"It would have been better not to have forgotten to put a good income into my pocket," answered the peasant. "Poor people ought not to be reproached for their desires, because they haven't the means of satisfying them. It seems to me that it would not be too much to ask the good Lord for a roof that sheds the water and doesn't draw vermin like this cursed thatch."

"That is to say, you keep constantly returning to your old idea of having a tile roof?"

"Yes; and if I wasn't so poor I should have it done at my own expense, and I should make by it, seeing that the house would be more healthy and my grain better kept."

"But you—would you be any better satisfied?"

"I wouldn't ask anything more of the good Lord or of the master."

"*Parbleu*, we shall see," said M. Favrol. "Although I consider the expenditure unprofitable for you and useless for me, I wish to find out if it is possible to satisfy you. You shall have your tile roof, Maître Antoine, and as soon as fine weather sets in I will send the workmen."

Lireux, surprised by this unexpected concession, thanked his landlord with effusion, and as soon as

the latter had left, he went into the house to tell the family of his good fortune.

Part of the day was employed in considering the advantages in this change of roof. Aside from the novel aspect that it would give to the farm-house, great benefit ought to be derived from the preservation of the grain; but Antoine soon saw that this could be doubled by slightly raising the walls upon which the frame rested. This discovery completely changed the current of his thoughts. He no longer thought of anything but this enlargement and of the profit that he would derive from it. Without this modification, the new roof was only an unimportant change; things might just as well be left as they were!

So here was our peasant fallen back into his old dark mood, bitterly deploring the lack of money that constantly balked him in the execution of his plans.

He was obliged to go to M. Favrol in order to pay his rent. The landlord noticed his troubled air and asked the cause. After hesitating some time, Lireux admitted his new preoccupation.

"It is not a request that I make of the master," he went on; "it was quite enough for him to promise to do away with the thatch; he was not obliged to do it, and poor people have a right only to what is due them."

"You may add that they have this in common with the rich," answered M. Favrol; "but I see that you are hard to cure of your discontent; one desire

fulfilled gives birth to a second. I mean to undertake the cure, however; we will raise the walls of the granary."

The farmer declared that this promise surpassed all his hopes, and he went gayly home.

A few days later a builder, sent by M. Favrol, came to examine the work to be done. In the course of conversation Antoine asked him what they were going to do with the old roof.

"Nothing, I suppose," said the builder. "It is the sort of framework for country buildings only and cannot support anything but thatch; at most it could be used for a barn."

"The very thing—ours is too small," said the farmer.

"Have you room for a larger one?"

"At the entrance to the stables; we could take a little from the garden. I will show you. Come."

The two went to look over the ground, which the builder did not fail to find admirably adapted to a new building. He showed Lireux the advantage there would be in putting up large sheds, in enlarging the stables a little, and digging a pit for the manure. Antoine adopted the plan with enthusiasm. Here was the means of completing the improvements undertaken, of giving the farm a visible superiority over all others in the neighborhood, and of making use of the old frame that was to be replaced. Without this further expenditure the projected changes would not have results proportionate to the cost, and M. Favrol ought, in his own interest, to decide upon them.

Lireux added, however, that he did not dare make the suggestion himself.

"I should be accused again of never being satisfied," he said, "and the master wouldn't understand that what I propose is as much for the farm as for me. If I had the money I should have built without asking any one, but poor people are obliged to stop at good ideas."

"Don't be afraid," said the builder, who did not understand how people could spend money on anything but building. "I will speak to the master and he can't help deciding upon doing it."

Antoine encouraged him eagerly and begged him to let him know the landlord's answer as soon as possible.

Left to himself, he began to ruminate upon the builder's ideas, which had become his own, and to calculate the profit he would derive from these changes. Thanks to the sheds, he could substitute winter threshing for summer threshing; the enlarging of the stables would enable him to keep a larger number of cattle for market, and the manure pit would utilize the drainage from the stables. Plainly these changes, which he had not thought of before, were indispensable additions; if he had not asked for them sooner, it was owing to his unwillingness to make complaints; but M. Favrol could not refuse them without hardness and injustice.

Several days elapsed, however, and he heard nothing from the builder. His impatience grew into torture. He went to see the man, who lived

in a distant village, but he could not find him. He returned, more uneasy than ever. To all appearances M. Favrol had refused; he could no longer count upon larger outbuildings; he must go on putting up with makeshifts and miss being rich for the lack of a little money on his part or a little good will on the part of others.

Lireux had wholly abandoned himself to these reflections, when he heard his name called. It was the builder, who had caught sight of him from the top of a scaffolding, where he was superintending his workmen.

"Well, the matter is settled, Père Antoine!" he cried.

"What matter?" asked the farmer, who dared not hope.

"*Parbleu!* The granary and the stables."

"The master consents?"

"We begin next month."

"Come and tell me about it over a glass!" cried Antoine joyfully; "you must tell me how it all came about."

The builder left the scaffolding and joined Lireux at the tavern. Antoine learned that the owner of Jonchères had only laughed without making any objections, and that he had asked the builder for a detailed estimate of the changes.

Antoine went home completely reassured. Upon his arrival he went at once to look at the site of the new buildings, planning everything beforehand with regard to the greatest convenience. The old entrance being impossible in the new plan, it was

necessary to make a passage through the garden; there was a hedge to be cut through and a ditch to be filled: he decided that he would do it at his own expense, without speaking to M. Favrol. But this arrangement cut off still more of the little garden, already reduced by the erection of the barn; it would be a loss that the proprietor of Jonchères could not refuse to make good. An unused piece of land lay on the further side of the road; Père Lireux considered that he might claim it by way of compensation. He betook himself accordingly to M. Favrol, under the pretext of wishing to know when the building was to begin.

"Well, *bonhomme* Lireux," said the landlord on seeing him, "I hope you are satisfied?"

"Poor people have no right to complain as long as they have bread," answered Antoine with reserve.

"A maximum of truly Christian resignation," said M. Favrol; "but it seems to me, Maître Antoine, that you have some other reasons for satisfaction. Have I not granted you everything you asked, including the new outbuildings?"

"I am much indebted to the master," said the farmer coldly; "but the master knows that the farmer lives by the soil, and to take away several furrows is like taking away a piece of bread."

"And who thinks of taking any away from you?" asked M. Favrol.

"Your pardon," said Antoine somewhat abashed, "it is the master's barn and the passage leading to it that take up a part of the garden. I don't want to complain; but if the master would let me

cultivate the little strip of land opposite the farm it would be a compensation."

"Ah, very good!" answered M. Favrol, looking at the farmer. "I believe there is about an acre in this little strip of land?"

"I couldn't say," answered Lireux with an innocent air. "I never measured it; but it is something for poor people like us, while it is nothing to the master."

"One moment," said the landlord; "let us count up, my good man. Here is the estimate of what you have asked of me; it amounts to 2,430 francs. Add to that the acre of ground and it would make about 3,500 francs' worth of desires gratified in a month! At that rate, Maître Antoine, it would take to satisfy a 'poor man' like you some 40,000 francs income—that is to say, as much again as I receive. Even then you would not be happy, for ever since my promise to roof your farm-house you have passed from one desire to another, always as restless and complaining as ever. You see now that riches can do nothing for the man who cannot limit his desires to what he has. The ancients tell in one of their fables of a king's sons who were condemned in purgatory to fill a bottomless cask; this is exactly what you are trying to do, Antoine. The happiness after which you have been running in vain ever since your childhood is not to be found where you think; it is not in wealth or in power, or in anything that surrounds our lives; God has placed it more nearly within our grasp; he has placed it in ourselves!"

USELESS THINGS.

"THE diligence from Paris!" cried a waiter, opening the door of the dining-room of the Grand Pelican at Colmar.

A traveler of middle age who had just finished his breakfast rose quickly at this announcement and ran to the hotel éntrance, where the heavy coach had stopped.

At the same instant a young man thrust his head out of the door of the *coupé*. The two travelers recognized each other and uttered an exclamation of delight.

"Father!"

"Camille!"

The door was hurriedly opened; the new arrival cleared the step at a bound and fell into the arms of the older man, who held him to his breast for several moments.

The father and son met for the first time after a separation of eight years, which period the son had been obliged to spend in London with an uncle of his mother. The death of this uncle, whose heir he was, left him at liberty to return to his father's house, which he had left when almost a child and to which he now returned of age.

After the first questions and the first expressions of affection, M. Isidor Berton proposed to Camille that they should go at once to the country seat near Rebeauvillé; Camille, anxious to see once more the home in which he was born, assented; the cabriolet was ordered and the father and son resumed their journey.

After a long separation there is often in first meetings a sort of curious embarrassment, and conversation is broken by involuntary silences. Unaccustomed to one another, each studies and observes the other, trying to discover the changes that time has made in the character as well as in the person. With a kind of uneasy uncertainty, we seek the past in the present. M. Berton, especially, was anxious to know the young man who had returned to him in the place of the child he had seen go away. Like the physician who examines a patient, he questioned him slowly, watched his every expression, and analyzed the least of his words.

Still continuing his observations, he entered into the conversation and began to talk of his own tastes and pursuits since his son's departure.

The owner of Ribeauvillé was neither a scientist nor an artist; but though powerless to create, he loved what others had created—like a mirror which reflects creation without itself creating! No invention was a matter of indifference to him, no emotion strange to him. He was interested in every discovery, was present at every experiment, encouraged every effort. To him life meant not

only to keep alive the spark that God has placed in each of us, but to spread it and kindle it by other sparks. Thanks to the leisure afforded him by his wealth, his activity had been able to develop itself freely. Not being bound to any one path, he had followed all in the footsteps of the workers, keeping up their courage by his aid and by his sympathy. Alsace had seen him at the head of every enterprise formed for the benefit of letters, science, or art, and the museums of Strasbourg had been enriched by his gifts.

At this very moment he was making costly excavations on a hillside where some vestiges of ancient potteries had been discovered. He pointed out the "Roman hillock" to his son in passing, and told him that in order to obtain it from its owner he had given in exchange an acre of his best meadow-land.

Camille looked surprised.

"You think I have gone mad, do you not?" asked M. Berton, who had been watching him.

"No, father," said the young man, "I was only surprised at the bargain."

"Why?"

"Because I think one ought to consider the useful in everything, and that this bleak hillside cannot be worth an acre of meadow-land."

"I see that you are not an archæologist."

"Quite true. I have never quite understood what old potteries were good for and what interest people could take in bygone generations."

M. Berton looked at his son, but said nothing.

Anxious to know him thoroughly, he did not wish to alarm his confidence by a discussion. There were some moments of silence that was suddenly broken by an exclamation from Camille. He had caught sight of the main tower of the manor-house among the trees.

"Ah, yes, it's my observatory," said his father, smiling; "for I am not only an antiquarian, my poor boy, but an astronomer likewise."

"You, father!"

"I have transformed the tower into a work-room and have had set up a telescope with which I examine what passes among the stars."

"And you find pleasure in busying yourself with things that are beyond your reach, that you cannot change, and that bring you nothing in return?"

"It takes up my time," said M. Berton, still evading a serious discussion. "Besides, you will see many other changes. The old poultry-yard has been transformed into an aviary and the orchard into a botanical garden."

"All these changes must have cost you a great deal."

"And bring me in nothing."

"Then you condemn them yourself?"

"I do not say that I don't. But here we are."

The groom ran forward to take the reins, and while he drove the cabriolet around to the stables the two travelers entered the house.

Camille found the hall incumbered with old armor, geological specimens, and herbariums filled with Alsacian flora.

"You are looking for a rack to hang your coat on?" said M. Berton, seeing him looking around with some disappointment; "it would be more useful than my curiosities, truly; but let us go on to the *salon*."

The *salon* was decorated from floor to ceiling with with paintings, rare engravings, and cabinets filled with medals. Their owner asked his son to admire certain collections, but the latter excused himself on the plea of ignorance.

"True, all these things are of little importance," said M. Berton good-naturedly. "We are nothing but big children who are amused by curiosities; but I am glad to see that you look at life from a practical standpoint."

"I owe it to Uncle Barker," said Camille with somewhat theatrical modesty; "he often used to complain of the time and money spent upon the frivolities of art, and used to try in vain to discover what profit humanity could find in a blackened paper or a painted canvas."

They were interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who announced dinner and handed M. Berton a book that had just come by post: it was the eagerly expected work of a favorite poet. He began to glance over it, but stopped suddenly and closed the book.

"Come," he said, "I am not going to delay your dinner for verses! Uncle Barker would not have forgiven me."

"I am afraid not," answered Camille, smiling; "he often used to ask what poetry was good for."

The father and son seated themselves at table, where the conversation was continued upon the same subject. Camille expounded freely the opinions that he owed to Uncle Barker, for the latter had taught him to be frank, though the frankness of the old economist came less from the love of truth than from the love of utility. He respected the straight line, not because it was straight, but because he knew it to be the shortest. To him, lying was a false calculation, vice a bad investment, passion an exaggerated expenditure! In all things, utility was the supreme law. In consequence, there was an indefinable barrenness in even the good actions of the young man's uncle; his virtues seemed no more than well-worked out problems.

Camille had adopted his uncle's doctrines with the enthusiasm with which youth accepts the absolute. Gradually bringing everything down to this definite question, "Of what use is it?" his reasoning (which he took for reason) had reduced all social duties to mathematical problems. Cured of the mental derangement called poetry, as he expressed it, he had treated life as the Jew who scraped a picture by Titian so as to have a clean piece of canvas that would be good for something.

M. Berton expressed neither anger nor impatience as his son aired his opinions. He advanced several objections which the young man refuted victoriously, seemed impressed by his reasoning, and when they separated for the night declared that they must discuss the question again.

And the next day and the days that followed, M. Berton led the conversation to the same subject, yielding more and more, as a man gained over by persuasion. Camille, become his father's teacher, rejoiced in that singular *rôle*, and finding himself triumphant, redoubled his eloquence. When he was obliged, at last, to make a visit to some relatives who lived in the neighborhood, he left M. Berton completely converted.

Camille's absence lasted a week: this time had sufficed to burst the buds and cover the country-side with flowers. When he returned, the swallows were darting in the blue heavens with joyous cries; the peasant women's songs rising from the wash-houses answered those of the herdsmen wandering over the fallow fields, and the warm breezes that swayed the unripe grain bore upon every road the scent of hawthorne, primrose, and violet.

In spite of his systematic indifference to poetry, Camille could not altogether escape the influence of that of the reawakening of nature. Without knowing it, he gave himself up to the charm of sunshine, song, and perfume; an involuntary emotion seized him, and he reached the manor-house in a species of intoxication.

He met his father in the middle of the *parterre* that formed the entrance court. M. Berton was surrounded by workmen who were pulling up flowers and cutting down shrubs. Two lilacs whose perfumed clusters had shaded the windows on the ground-floor had been cut down to make into fire-wood.

The young man could not restrain a cry of surprise.

"Ah! There you are," said M. Berton on seeing him. "*Parbleu!* you have come just in time to enjoy your triumph!"

"My triumph!" repeated Camille, who did not understand.

"Don't you see that I have become your disciple?" answered the master of Ribeauvillé. "I have been thinking a great deal of what you have said to me, *mon cher*, and I see that you and Uncle Barker were right. We must leave useless things out of life. Flowers and shrubs are in a garden what poetry is in a library; and, as you very justly said, What is poetry good for? Unless it is to light a fire with, like my lilacs. But come, come, you shall see many other changes. I have taken advantage of your absence and I hope you will be pleased."

So saying, M. Berton passed his arm familiarly through Camille's and led him into the manor-house.

The hall had been stripped of the curios that had formerly filled it and they had been replaced by umbrella-stands, spittoons, and hat-racks. In the *salon* all the drawings and paintings had been removed and the bare walls whitewashed. Furniture all of one pattern and perfectly plain had taken the place of the Louis XIII. chairs, the Gothic chests, and the Renaissance cabinets. M. Berton cast a beaming glance at his son.

"Well," he said, "you can't accuse me this time

of sacrificing usefulness to the frivolities of art; our *salon* has now nothing but four white walls whose utility no one can deny. We couldn't have a better place for hanging our guns or leaving our boots."

Camille attempted to venture some objections, but his father closed his lips by reminding him of the anathema he had pronounced against "blackened paper and painted canvases which had never been of any use to humanity."

The changes, moreover, had not been confined to the *salon;* the whole house had undergone the same transformation. Everything that was intended only to please had been pitilessly sacrificed. Everything had a daily and definite use; the pleasant had everywhere given way before the practical.

M. Berton, who displayed this new order of things with considerable pride, informed Camille that he did not mean to stop here. The despoiled *parterre* was to be converted into a poultry-yard, his botanical garden into a manure-yard. He had not yet decided to what new use he should put his observatory. He was hesitating between a dove-cote and a windmill.

Camille, stunned by the exaggeration of the reform, but withheld by the principles he had himself professed, abstained from expressing approval, being unable to blame.

Wishing to extricate himself from the dilemma by talking of other things, he asked if he had had any letters from England.

"I believe some came," said his father, "but as

you have no interests there now I gave orders to have them returned."

"What!" cried Camille. "I was expecting news from one of my best friends, who had promised to keep me informed upon the Irish question."

"Bah!" retorted M. Berton indifferently; "what pleasure can you take in things that are beyond your reach? Isn't Ireland the same to you as the stars were to me? Its revolutions profit you nothing, and you cannot change them."

"But I have the interest of my sympathies," protested the young man.

"Can they be of use to you or to Ireland?" asked M. Berton calmly. "Do you think that your foresight can have any influence upon her destiny, that your wishes can be of any help to her?"

"I do not say that."

"Then the expenditure for mailage does no good to anybody. To admit this is to condemn it yourself."

Camille bit his lips; he was beaten with his own weapons, and this irritated him all the more. This rigorous application of his doctrines had the appearance of a punishment. Without attacking the principle he began to criticise in detail the proposed or accomplished improvements, but M. Berton had anticipated everything and found an answer for every objection. Finally Camille, at the end of his arguments, pretended that the *parterre* was not suited to its new purpose and that a poultry-yard should be paved. His father struck his forehead.

"*Parbleu!* you are right!" he cried. "I have the very thing I need for that—six-foot slabs."

"Where are they?" asked the young man.

"In the little chapel cemetery; there are the family tombs that are no use to any one."

"And you mean to use them for paving?" cried Camille.

"Why not? Do you happen to be interested in old stones, and are you attached to bygone generations?"

"Ah, this is too much!" cried Camille. "You cannot be speaking seriously, father. You cannot believe that instincts, tastes, sentiments can be subjected to the rude arithmetic of interest; you cannot wish that the human soul should become a book of double entry where the figures alone decide. I understand all now: this is a lesson."

"Or, rather, an example," said M. Berton, taking his son's hand. "I wished to show you to what Uncle Barker's doctrines would lead and in what destitution an abundance of merely useful things would leave us. Never forget the holy words that you heard in your childhood: 'Man does not live by bread alone.' That is to say, by what is necessary for his material existence. He needs, besides, all that feeds the soul; he needs science, art, poetry. What you call useless things are precisely those that give value to useful things. The latter sustain life, the former make it beautiful. Without them the moral world would become like a country without verdure, without flowers, and without birds.

One of the principal differences between man and the brute is this very need of an immaterial superfluity. It proves our higher aspirations, our leaning toward the infinite, and the existence of that portion of ourselves that seeks its satisfaction beyond the real world in the supreme joys of the ideal."

A JOURNEY BY DILIGENCE.

It was one of the last days of September. The rain, after pouring in torrents all day, had ceased; but a thick mist hid the sky, and although scarcely four o'clock, night seemed to have already fallen.

A heavy diligence was struggling painfully up one of the steep ascents that separate Belleville from Lyon, and the postillions walked on either side of the vehicle, stopping every fifty paces to let the animals take breath. The passengers themselves had dismounted at the guard's invitation, and followed on foot, cursing the horses, the rain, and the bad roads.

Two of the passengers who came last stopped suddenly in a turn in the ascent. One was a man of about fifty, with a smiling and kindly face; the other, younger, had a careworn expression. He let his eyes wander over the landscape, half-obliterated by the mist, and said to his companion:

"What weather and what a year, Cousin Grugel! The Saône has scarcely settled back into its bed, and now the valleys will be flooded again."

"Heaven preserve us from that, Gontran!" answered man with the pleasant face; "the Ark of the

Covenant may appear at any moment upon the flood."

"Yes," answered the other, with a touch of irony. "I know you have a mania of hope, Jacques."

"As you have of despondency, Darvon."

"Am I not justified when I see how things are going in the world? Where do you see peace, order, prosperity? I hear nothing talked of but murders, floods, disease! Whatever is spared from the wickedness of man, the wickedness of nature destroys; for matter, brute itself, seems to have the instinct of destruction; the elements are like kings —they cannot be neighbors without making war upon one another."

"That is one side of the picture, cousin, the sad side, but there is another of which you never speak. Your eyes are always fixed upon the volcano that smokes upon the horizon, and never look down upon the fields of ripe grain that sway at your feet. There is happiness in the world, after all."

"I know nothing about it," answered Gontran peevishly.

"But you yourself, are you not one of the fortunate ones of the earth?"

"True, Jacques, and yet, among all the blessings that have been allotted one, I have never found peace or contentment."

"What more can you want? You are rich, honored, you have a sister who loves you."

"Yes," answered Gontran, "but my fortune has cost me the wearisome lawsuit that has called me

three times to Maçon; my good reputation has not prevented my opponent from insulting me through his lawyer, and as to my sister——"

"Well?" demanded Jacques.

"My sister, with whom I have always lived so affectionately—I have had a quarrel with her."

"It will be a short quarrel."

"No. I am tired of uselessly trying to establish order in her affairs; I have suffered too much from her want of logic and reason."

"Think of her good heart and you will forgive her."

"Oh, I know you will always find some reason for my taking my troubles patiently; you have a salve for every mental wound, and if I were to stir you up a little you would prove to me that I am wrong to complain; that everything in this world is right."

"I beg your pardon," answered Grugel; "there are things in the management of the world that hurt me as they do you; but I am not at all sure of being able to judge them rightly. Life is a great mystery of which we understand so little. Must I even admit to you? There are times when I persuade myself that God has not afflicted mankind with so many burdens without intention. Happy and invulnerable we would become hardened; each would count upon his individual strength, would delight in his isolation, and would be without sympathy for his fellow-man. Weakness, on the contrary, has forced men to seek each other's

society, to help each other, to love each other; suffering has become a bond; it is to it that we owe the noblest and sweetest sentiments: gratitude, devotion, pity."

"Quite right!" said Darvon, smiling; "not being able to prove that everything is good, you are going to prove to me that there is good in evil."

"Sometimes," said Grugel; "you may be sure that evil itself is not absolute. Science owes remedies to the juice of poisonous plants; why cannot one derive some benefit from misfortunes, annoyances, and passions? Believe me, Darvon, there is no human mineral so poor but that one can find in it some grains of gold."

"*Parbleu!* I should like to know how much you would find in our traveling companions!" cried Gontran. "Come, cousin, let us place in the retort these curious specimens of the race which we claim to be the highest in intelligence."

"It is certain," replied Gontran, smiling, "that fate has not been kind to us."

"Never mind, never mind!" answered Darvon, whose misanthropy made him malicious; "let us extract the gold from the mineral, as you say. And to begin with, how many grains do you expect to find in the cattle dealer there walking ahead of us?"

Grugel raised his head and saw a few paces in front of them the traveler of whom his cousin had spoken. He was a big man in a blue blouse, and he was trudging up the ascent with a heavy tread, munching the while at a wing of fowl.

"That is the seventh meal I have seen him make since morning," went on Darvon, "and the pockets of the coach are still stuffed with his provisions. When he has eaten he sleeps, then eats, then goes to sleep, to begin over again. He isn't even an imbecile, he is an eating machine! You have seen him yourself; impossible to get an answer or a bit of information out of him!"

"Our friend in the felt cap acquits himself better in that respect."

"Ah! let us take him and extract his grain of gold! We have had him with us only since this morning, and the guard has already sent him from the imperial back to the passengers in the *coupé*, who have sent him to those inside. He has been with us only two hours and he has told us his history and that of his family to the fifth degree. I know that his name is Pierre Lepré, that he has traveled through the departments of Saône-et-Loire, Ain, Fère, and the Rhône for twenty years selling colonial commodities, and that he has been married three times. If one were only not obliged to submit to his questions, but he is as curious as he is voluble and when he has finished his confidences he expects you to make yours. If you are trying to think, he talks to you; if you talk, he interrupts; his voice is like a rattle always going and the noise ends by setting your nerves on edge."

"Poor Lepré!" said Grugel; "he is a good fellow at bottom, after all."

"He has one merit," went on Darvon, "which is

of annoying Mademoiselle Athénaïs de Locherais; we were about to forget that amiable traveling companion, who, after crying that we must get out in order to lighten the coach, remained there alone for fear of wetting her feet."

"You must forgive her," remarked Jacques; "retirement has accustomed her to think of no one but herself; her heart has grown narrow."

"Narrow!" repeated Gontran; "you are mistaken, cousin. Mademoiselle Athénaïs de Locherais has a tremendous love—for herself! The whole world was created for her particular use; she does not understand that anything can happen in it that does not regard her. She is one of those sweet creatures who, when they hear people shouting murder in the street, turn over on their pillows, grumbling at having been awakened."

Grugel was about to answer, but they had reached the top of the hill, the coach had stopped, and the guard called to the passengers to remount. He had just been joined by a mounted messenger, who announced that the overflowing of the Saône rendered the crossing by Villefranche impossible and warned them to turn to the right to cross the Niseran higher up and enter Anse by a roundabout way. The diligence that preceded them had not taken this precaution and had been overtaken by the flood; there was a rumor that several persons had been drowned. This last report was, fortunately, not communicated to the passengers, but all protested when they heard of the long *détour* that must be made.

"There's a curse upon us," said Gontran, already exasperated by the slowness of the journey.

"I expected as much, monsieur," exclaimed Pierre Lepré, from whom the two postilions had made their escape and who now fell back upon his companions. "I heard on the way that the Ardière and the Vauzanne had overflowed their banks; it even remains to be seen whether we can cross at Anse, where we find the rivers Azergues and Brevanne. What road are we to take, guard? Shall we go by the forest of Oingt? I know the maire—a tall thin man, always smoking. By the way, though, aren't we going to stop before we reach Anse?"

"Impossible," answered the guard. "We're already eight hours late."

"Well, but where are we to have supper?" cried the cattle dealer.

"We shall not have supper, monsieur."

"I insist upon having some bouillon," interrupted Mademoiselle Athénaïs de Locherais in a shrill voice, putting her head out of the coach door. "I always have my bouillon at five o'clock."

"We have had nothing since morning!" protested all the passengers.

"Get in, messieurs!" answered the guard sharply; "an hour's delay may prevent our arriving at all. There's no joking with a flood, especially at night. I've no desire to have my coach swept away."

"Swept away!" cried Mademoiselle Athenaïs; "horrible! We should have been warned. Guard, I

demand that you leave the valley; you are responsible for me, guard; I shall complain to the management."

The starting of the diligence cut the spinster's words short and she fell back into her corner with a moan.

Jacques Grugel felt called upon to tell her that the *détour* they were making led them away from the Saône and there was therefore nothing to be feared.

"But where am I to get my bouillon?" she asked, somewhat reassured.

"We shall not stop until we reach Anse," answered Lepré, "the guard said so, and Heaven knows what roads we shall find! Department roads, and that's all you need say! And yet I know the engineer. He's a clever fellow; his son was married the same day as my eldest daughter. But we shan't reach Anse before to-morrow."

There was a general exclamation: the majority of the passengers had not eaten since morning, counting upon the stop that was usually made at Villefranche, and Gontran with characteristic impetuosity was about to propose that they should stop the coach by force at the next village and have supper served them, when the cattle dealer cried:

"Supper! I have one at your service."

"What! for every one?" asked Lepré.

"For every one, *bourgeois*. I can offer you three courses with dessert and a drop of *schnick* on top of it."

So saying, he drew from the pockets of the coach half a dozen packages, which he began to open, moistening his lips the while: provisions of all kinds, neatly wrapped up and tied with care.

"It will be a regular feast," said Lepré, who had helped the cattle dealer in making an inventory of the packages. "*Peste!* monsieur. Excuse me, but what is your name?"

"Baruau."

"*Peste!* Monsieur Baruau, you live well!"

"What would be the use of having money if one didn't eat of the best?" said the big man with some show of pride. "For the rest, messieurs and mademoiselle, you shall judge of my cuisine."

Grugel turned to Gontran with a significant look.

"Well," he said smilingly and in an undertone, "here are the grains of gold that you were looking for!"

"Grains of gold!" repeated Baruau, who did not understand; "your pardon, monsieur, these are truffle sausages."

"The gentlemen mean that they are gold to hungry people," answered Lepré, laughing; "it is a figure of speech, Monsieur Baruau. I have a son who learned about figures in studying rhetoric; he explained the thing to me. But, pardon—mademoiselle must be served first."

The provisions were presented to Mademoiselle de Locherais, who turned over every piece, choosing the daintiest morsels, which she ate, complaining all

the while of the privations to which one was exposed in traveling. By way of consolation, Baruau offered her a glass of old cognac, but Mademoiselle de Locherais uttered a cry of horror.

"Cognac to me!" she cried indignantly. "What do you take me for, monsieur?"

"Perhaps you would prefer currant wine?" persisted the cattle dealer innocently.

"I do not drink either currant wine or brandy!" retorted Mademoiselle Athenaïs haughtily; "I never drink anything but water."

And turning to Grugel:

"Fancy such a thing!" she murmured. "To offer me brandy! As if the spices in what he has made us eat were not enough to ruin one's stomach! I am sure I shall be ill."

As she said this, she settled herself in her corner so as to turn her back upon the cattle dealer, took out a pillow she had brought with her, leaned her head against it, and fell into a doze.

The diligence advanced painfully along the gullied roads. The air, although damp, was cold and the night was starless. Inspired by the repast which Baruau's gastronomic precautions had provided, Lepré recovered all his loquacity, and although his companions had long since ceased to answer him, he went on talking without troubling himself as to whether any one were listening to him.

The monotonous sound of his voice, the slowness of their progress, the darkness, the cold, had filled

all the passengers with an irritable discontent that expressed itself every moment by yawns, shivers, and smothered complaints. Darvon, especially seemed to be prey to a nervous irritability that increased from moment to moment. He had already pulled up and drawn down ten times the shade of the coach door, rested his head first to one side and then to the other, placed his legs in every position permitted by the narrow space at his disposal, and finally, at daybreak, his patience was exhausted.

"I would give ten of the days still left me to live, to be at the end of this journey!" he cried.

"Here we are at Anse," answered Grugel.

"*Ma foi!* That's so!" cried Lepré, who had dozed off for a moment. "Holà! guard, how long do we stay here?"

"Five minutes."

"Open the door! I shall have time to say how do you do to the *maître de poste*."

The door was opened and Baruau got out with Lepré to renew his stock of provisions. At the same instant the booking agent approached to ask if there were any seats.

"Only one," answered Grugel.

"What!" cried Mademoiselle de Locherais, who had awakened with a start. "Does monsieur mean to put any one else in here?"

"A passenger for Lyons."

"But it is impossible!" went on the spinster; "we are already horribly crowded, monsieur; your

coaches are too small. I shall complain to the management."

"Doubtless this is our new companion," remarked Gontran, who was looking out of the window. "Monsieur Lepré has already taken possession of him."

"A soldier!" cried Mademoiselle de Locherais.

"A non-commissioned officer of chasseurs."

"Ah, Dieu! And he is going to get in here! Why don't they oblige soldiers to travel on foot?"

"It would be a cruel and exhausting thing in such weather, mademoiselle."

"It is their business, is it not? Such people don't get tired. Public conveyances expose one to such odious company, without taking into consideration that all one's habits are upset. Nothing hot to eat; to pass the night without sleep; to be crowded, smothered. I don't see why one of these gentlemen does not ride outside."

"In spite of the mist?"

"What does it matter for men?"

"Mademoiselle would certainly be less crowded," observed Darvon ironically. "She might suggest it to our new companion."

"I! speak to a soldier?" said Mademoiselle Athenaïs proudly. "I would rather suffer, monsieur."

"Here he is!" interposed Jacques.

The officer, indeed, had made his appearance at the door, followed by the booking agent, with whom he was disputing. He was a young man of alert

bearing, but his swaggering manner repelled Darvon at the first glance. He was complaining at the delay of the coach for which he had been waiting since the previous night, and was belaboring with words the booking agent, whose answers were timid and embarrassed. Finally, upon the guard's announcing that the coach was about to start, the young man approached the door and looked in.

"A magnificent assemblage!" he muttered: "if the *coupé* and the *rotonde* are only as well provided!"

And he got in.

"This completes our collection of absurdities," said Gontran in a low voice, leaning toward Grugel.

"Take care that he doesn't hear you," answered Jacques.

Darvon lifted his shoulders.

"Blusterers have always filled me with more contempt than fear," he said, "and this one needs a lesson in politeness."

Baruau had returned without Lepré. The guard had sent for him to the tavern, and, after waiting several minutes, the coach had started without him, to the great joy of Mademoiselle de Locherais, who now hoped that she would have more comfort. But her joy was of short duration, for the officer, who had first seated himself on the other seat, sat down at her side. The old maid drew herself up angrily and let down her veil. The soldier turned toward her.

"*Tiens!*" he said mockingly; "madame is afraid of being looked at, it seems!"

"Perhaps, monsieur," said Athenaïs dryly.

"I understand her reason," went on the officer; "but she may be quite easy; I will deprive myself of the pleasure."

And, seeing Mademoiselle de Locherais' start of indignation:

"What I say," he went on, "is in the interest of mademoiselle's health and to enable her to breathe with uncovered face, especially as there is a lack of air in this box. The window must be let down."

"I object," answered Mademoiselle de Locherais vehemently; "my physician has forbidden me to expose myself to the morning air."

"And mine has forbidden me to smother," retorted the young man, reaching out his hand to lower the glass.

But the spinster declared that the window was on her side, that she had the right to keep it closed, and she appealed to the other passengers.

Little as Darvon was disposed in favor of Mademoiselle de Locherais, he thought himself obliged to take her part, and there followed between him and the chasseur a discussion that would have grown violent had not Grugel relinquished to the soldier his own place by the other window.

The officer accepted with a bad grace, retaining a dull irritation against Gontran.

The reader has already perceived that the latter's dominant qualities were neither patience nor resignation. The mishaps of the journey, moreover, had excited his morbid irascibility; thus the dissen-

sion that had already broken out between him and the chasseur was renewed several times with increasing bitterness, until a final incident precipitated it into an open quarrel.

Darvon had placed several small pieces of luggage in the net overhead; the officer pretended that he was inconvenienced by them and demanded their removal. Gontran refused.

"You are determined to leave them?" cried the soldier after a discussion in which he had grown more and more heated.

"Determined," answered Gontran.

"Very good; I will rid myself of them by flinging them out of the window," answered the young man, reaching up to the net.

Darvon seized his hand.

"Take care what you do, monsieur," he said in an altered tone. "Ever since you joined us you have tried repeatedly to make me lose patience. You have acted as though you were privileged to insult and bully; but understand that I, for one, am not the man to put up with it."

"Is that a threat?" casting a disdainful glance at Gontran.

"By no means," interrupted Grugel, alarmed by the turn the discussion was taking. "My cousin is only reminding you——"

"I take no reminders from *pékins*," interrupted the soldier.

"And *pékins* will not accept your insolence," answered Gontran.

At the word insolence the officer trembled; a sudden flush spread over his face.

"Where do you stop, monsieur?" he asked Darvon in a voice shaking with anger.

"At Lyon," answered the latter.

"Very well. We will finish our explanations there."

"Be it so."

Jacques in dismay tried to interpose, but his cousin and the chasseur cut him short simultaneously, repeating that they would settle the affair at Lyon.

Just then a great shouting was heard and a wagonette covered with mud appeared in the distance. Mademoiselle de Locherais put her head out of the door.

"Ah, mon Dieu! What a misfortune," she cried. "M. Pierre Lepré has overtaken us; we shall be full."

As soon as he had reached the mail coach Lepré sprang from the wagonette and presented himself at the door, which the guard had opened.

"Ah, so this is how you go off without waiting for the passengers!" he cried furiously.

"I notified you three times," protested the guard.

"You should have notified me six times, monsieur; twelve times: you are miserly of your words, are you? What do words cost? Perhaps I could not leave the *maêtre de poste* while he was telling me of the disaster that overtook yesterday's diligence; for you do not know, messieurs, that the coach that preceded this one was swept away."

"Swept away!" repeated every voice.

"Good," interrupted the guard, "but get in——"

"Not at all, it isn't good at all," went on Pierre Lepré; "every one is in consternation."

"I beg of you, monsieur, get in at once."

"And what will our families think when they hear of the disaster?"

"Come, be quick!"

"I was just about to learn the details when they told me the diligence had gone without me."

"And we will do the same again," said the guard impatiently.

"*Par exemple!*" cried Lepré, who hurriedly got in. "I've had enough of that wagonette; here I am, guard, go ahead!"

The commercial traveler was overwhelmed with questions, and he told all he knew; then interrupting himself as his habit was, he exclaimed on recognizing the young officer:

"Eh! it is monsieur I had the honor of meeting at Anse?"

"The same," answered the chasseur.

"Delighted to meet you again," said Lepré. "I am a friend of all soldiers; I should even have served myself if a substitute had not been found for me."

He was interrupted by Mademoiselle Athenaïs, who had just observed that he was wet.

"It's this accursed mist," he said, mopping himself with his handkerchief.

"But people should not get into a carriage in

such a state," objected Mademoiselle de Locherais pettishly; "when people are damp, they should remain outside."

"To get dry?" asked Lepré, laughing; "thank you, I have had enough of it; then, too, my coachman was drunk; he almost drove us into the river."

"Ah! *diable.*"

"Something more to add to yesterday's diligence: that is, unless there had been some brave fellow to fish us out! Such a thing did happen once. Three years ago, at the time of the great inundation, a workman, by his own efforts, saved five people who were drowning in a carriage, near La Guillotière."

"We know about it even better than you," said Grugel; "my cousin's best friend was one of them."

"Indeed?" asked the chasseur.

"And he owed his life to the bravery of this young man."

"Oh, it was a noble deed from beginning to end," broke in Darvon warmly; "the terrified horse had dragged the carriage into the strongest part of the current; the crowd looked on from the shore without daring to offer help; there was no hope for the five people in the carriage."

"Bah!" interrupted the chasseur; "there were some who could swim, perhaps, and would have saved themselves."

Gontran did not deign to answer.

"The carriage was beginning to sink," he went on, "when a workman appeared in a little boat which he guided with difficulty to the middle of the

Rhône; three times he was on the point of upsetting. The people on the shore cried: 'Don't go on! Come back, you will be drowned!' But he did not listen to them and continued to make his way to the carriage, which he reached at last by dint of courage and skill."

"And good luck," added the soldier.

"Doubtless," answered Grugel, who had noticed Gontran's impatient gesture; "but only brave hearts have luck like that."

"It was a brave deed," interrupted Mademoiselle Athenaïs de Locherais, "and should have profited its author."

"Excuse me, madame," said Darvon, "the workman doubtless thought that the real reward of our generous actions is to be found in ourselves; for, the people saved, he disappeared without waiting to accept either money or thanks."

"*Pardieu*! It would have been a fine thing to take pay!" cried the officer.

"And his name is not known?" asked Lepré.

"His name was Louis Duroc."

"Hein! You say Louis——"

"Duroc."

Lepré turned to the officer.

"Why, it's your name!" he cried.

"Monsieur's name?" echoed all the passengers.

"Louis Duroc, called *L'Africain;* I asked him at Anse while we were chatting at the tavern, and I saw it on his valise besides."

"Well, what then?" asked the chasseur, laughing. "It is certainly my name."

"Is it possible?" broke in Gontran; "and you are——"

"The workman in question. Yes, messieurs; there's no need of proclaiming it, but there's no need of hiding it, either. I entered the service a week later and my regiment left for Algeria, so that the people in the carriage and I have lost sight of each other; but I hope to renew the acquaintance during my stay in Lyon."

"I shall take you to them myself!" said Darvon eagerly, holding out his hand; "for I hope that we shall be friends, Monsieur Louis."

"We?" repeated the soldier, looking hesitatingly at Gontran.

"Ah, forget what has passed," answered the latter; "I am ready, if need be, to admit that I was wrong."

"No!" interrupted Duroc. "No, *parbleu!* it was I who was wrong and I am sorry for it, upon my word! A foolish habit of the regiment, you see! Because we're not afraid we wish to proclaim it at every turn, but we're good children at bottom; so, no malice, monsieur."

He had pressed Gontran's hand cordially; Lepré pressed the young soldier's with equal friendliness.

"*A la bonne heure!*" he cried; "you're a true Frenchman—and so is monsieur—and Frenchmen ought always to agree. Enchanted to have made your acquaintance, M. Louis Duroc. But do you know that it is very fortunate I made you tell me your name—which you didn't want to do, by the

way! If it hadn't been for me, we shouldn't have known your worth."

"Quite right," said Grugel, looking at Darvon; "if monsieur had been less talkative, this explanation would never have taken place, and without it my cousin would have been mistaken in M. Louis' real character. You see that fate seems to have taken upon itself the task of proving my theory correct, and that all the honors of the day are mine."

As he finished speaking, the coach stopped: they had reached their destination.

The passengers on alighting found the court-yard of the *Messageries* filled with waiting relations and friends. The disaster of the previous day was known and had aroused the keenest apprehensions.

Just as Darvon was stepping to the ground, he heard his name spoken and he turned: it was his sister, whose anxiety had made her forget their quarrel, and she ran to meet him with cries of joy.

The two held each other for some time in silence, their eyes wet with tears, and when they took each other by the hand and looked at each other, they were reconciled.

As they went out of the court-yard of the *Messageries* they met their traveling companions. Baruau and Lepr saluted them; Louis Duroc renewed his promise to visit them; Mademoiselle Athénaïs de Locherais alone passed without recognizing them, wholly occupied in looking out for her luggage. Jacques Grugel turned to Gontran.

"There is the only flaw in my doctrine," he said, pointing to the spinster. "All our other companions have been more or less transformed in our eyes: the gourmand by procuring us a supper, the chatterer by revealing a useful secret, the braggart by giving us a proof of generous bravery; but how have we been benefited by the cold egoism of Mademoiselle de Locherais?"

"It has made me feel the value of tenderness and devotion," answered Gontran, pressing his sister's arm. "Ah! I shall adopt your system, cousin: henceforth I shall believe that there is a good side to everything and that we must only know how to find the vein of gold."

THE TREASURE.

A YOUNG girl and an old man were seated in a little garret, the more than modest but carefully kept furnishings of which bore evidence of a self-respecting poverty.

Cleanliness, neatness, and taste gave a sort of elegance to the poor interior. Everything was in its place; the brick floor was carefully scrubbed, the faded upholstery spotless, and the window was hung with little curtains of coarse muslin where numerous darns formed a species of pattern. Some pots of cheap flowers adorned the front of the half-open window and scented the air with their perfume.

The sun was setting: a purple light brightened the humble dwelling, touching the sweet face of the young girl and playing in the white hair of the old man.

The latter was half-reclining in a rush-bottomed arm-chair which loving hands had garnished with cushions stuffed with tow and covered with old bits of printed calico. An old foot-warmer transformed into a stool supported his crippled feet, and his remaining arm rested on a small round table where

were a meerschaum pipe and a tobacco pouch embroidered in colored beads.

The roughness of the old soldier's stern and furrowed face was softened by an expression of frankness. A gray mustache hid the half-smile that parted his lips as his glance rested absently upon the young girl.

The latter might be twenty years old; she was a brunette with gentle but mobile features which betrayed their owner's feelings by quick and sudden changes of expression. Her face was like one of those fair sheets of water which reveal to their very depths all that they contain.

She held a newspaper in her hand and was reading aloud to the invalid; suddenly she interrupted herself to listen.

"What is it?" asked the old man.

"Nothing," answered the girl, whose face betrayed disappointment.

"You thought you heard Charles?" went on the soldier.

"Yes," said Suzanne, flushing slightly; "his day's work must be over; it is the time that he returns——"

"When he does return," added Vincent in a tone of annoyance.

Suzanne opened her lips to defend her cousin; but her better judgment doubtless made her change her mind, for she stopped in confusion and then fell into a reverie.

The invalid passed his remaining hand over his

mustache and began to twist it impatiently, as was his usual gesture in his fits of discontent.

"Our conscript is making a bad march," he resumed at last; "he comes home sullen, he breaks into his work to spend his time at the public-houses and the *fêtes de barrières;* it'll end badly for him and for us."

"Don't say that, uncle, you will bring misfortune upon him," answered the young girl tremulously. "He will get over it, I hope. For some time my cousin has had such strange ideas! He takes no interest in his work."

"And why not?"

"Because, he says, he has nothing to hope from it. He thinks that all effort on the part of a workman is useless and that the best he can do is to live from day to day without hope or thought of the future."

"Ah, so that's his system, is it?" replied the old man, whose forehead had darkened. "Well, he cannot claim the honor of having invented it. We had reasoners like him in the regiment, who got out of going with the rest under the pretext that the distance was too great, and stayed behind in the depots while their companies were entering Madrid, Berlin, and Vienna. Your cousin doesn't know that by dint of placing one foot before the other even the shortest legs can make the journey to Rome."

"Ah, if you could only make him understand it!" cried Suzanne with anxious fervor; "I have tried to convince him by reckoning up what a good book-

binder like him could save; but when I reached the total he shrugged his shoulders and said that women knew nothing about such things."

"And so you gave up in despair, poor child," went on Vincent with a tender smile; "I see now why your eyes are red so often."

"Uncle, indeed——"

"And why you forget to water your gilliflowers and why you don't sing."

"Uncle——"

Suzanne dropped her eyes in confusion and twisted the corner of the newspaper.

The old man laid his hand upon her head.

"Come, she doesn't think I am scolding her," he said with brusque kindness. "Is it not quite natural that you should take an interest in Charles, who is your cousin now, and who some day, I hope——"

The young girl made a gesture.

"Well, we won't say any more about that," said the invalid, breaking off. "I forget that with you women one must always be ignorant of what one knows. We won't say anything more about it, I say, and let us go back to that good-for-nothing for whom you have a certain amount of friendship—that is the proper word, isn't it?—and who has an equal amount for you."

Suzanne shook her head.

"He did have, once," she said; "but for some time—ah, if you only knew how cold he has been, how listless!"

"Yes," answered Vincent thoughtfully, "when one has had a taste of noisy amusements home pleasures seem tame; it's like unfermented wine after *schnick*. Many of us have experienced it."

"But they have been cured," said Suzanne; "and Charles will be cured, too. Perhaps if you speak to him, uncle, it will be enough."

The old man made a motion of incredulity.

"Such maladies cannot be treated with words, but with acts," he answered. "You cannot make a reasonable man in a moment any more than you can a good soldier: they must have experience, the test of fatigue, and the baptism of the cannon! Your cousin lacks the will, because he sees no object. We must show him one that will give him courage; but it is no small matter. I will think it over."

"This time it is really he!" interrupted the young girl, who had recognized upon the stair her cousin's hasty footstep.

"Silence in the ranks, then!" said the invalid. "Don't let us appear to be thinking of anything in particular, and go on with your reading."

Suzanne obeyed, but the trembling of her voice would have betrayed her emotion to an attentive observer. While her eyes followed the printed lines and her lips mechanically pronounced the words, her thoughts were wholly with her cousin, who had opened the door and had placed his cap upon the table in the middle of the room.

Not wishing to interrupt the reading, the young

man saluted neither his uncle nor his cousin, and going to the window he leaned against it with folded arms.

Suzanne went on without understanding what she read.

She was reading that collection of varied and often contradictory bits of news grouped under the general heading of "*faits divers*." Charles, who had at first seemed preoccuppied, began in spite of himself to pay attention. The young girl, after reading several announcements of thefts, fires, and accidents, reached the following:

"A poor peddler of Besançon called Pierre Lefèvre, wishing to make a fortune at any cost, conceived the idea of going to India, which he had heard spoken of as a country of gold and diamonds. He sold the little he possessed, went to Bordeaux, and took passage on an American ship in the capacity of second cook. Eighteen years passed without anything being heard of Pierre Lefèvre. His relations have at last received a letter announcing his near return and informing them that the ex-peddler, after indescribable suffering and reverses of fortune, has arrived in France, blind of one eye and with only one arm, but possessor of a fortune estimated at two millions."

Charles, who had been listening to the article with increasing attention, could not restrain an exclamation.

"Two millions!" he repeated wonderingly.

"They will help him to buy a glass eye and an artificial arm," observed the old soldier ironically.

"There's good fortune for you," went on the young bookbinder, paying no heed to his uncle's remark.

"Which he has not gotten on credit," added the invalid.

"Eighteen years of inexpressible suffering!" repeated Suzanne, laying stress upon the words.

"What does it matter so long as there is a fortune at the end of it?" replied Charles impetuously. "The hard thing is not the walking on a bad road nor the putting up with bad weather to reach a good shelter, but to go on walking without getting anywhere."

"Then you envy the peddler's lot?" asked the young girl, who had raised her eyes timidly to her cousin's. "You would give up your youth, one of your eyes, one of your hands——"

"For two millions?" interrupted Charles; "most certainly! You have only to find a purchaser for me at that price, Suzanne, and I'll guarantee you a dowry for pin-money."

The young girl turned away her head without replying; her heart contracted and the tears rose to her eyes. Vincent also was silent, but he had begun to twist his mustache again with a morose air.

There was a long silence: each of the three actors in this scene was following his or her train of thought.

The sound of the clock striking eight roused Suzanne from her preoccupation. She rose quickly and began to make preparations for supper.

It was a short and depressed meal. Charles, who had passed the last third of the day with his friends at the public-house, did not care to eat, and Suzanne had lost her appetite. Vincent alone did justice to the frugal repast. The vicissitudes of war had accustomed him to respect his stomach in the midst of all emotions, but he was soon satisfied, and returned to his arm-chair by the window.

After putting everything to rights, Suzanne, who felt the need of being alone, took a light, kissed her uncle, and retired to the little room which she occupied overhead. Vincent and the young bookbinder were left alone.

Charles was also about to bid his uncle good-night, when the old soldier made a sign to him to draw the bolt and to approach.

"I have something to say to you," he said gravely.

Charles, who foresaw reproaches, remained standing before the old man, but the latter motioned him to be seated.

"Did you consider well what you said awhile ago?" he asked, looking fixedly at his nephew. "Would you really be capable of a prolonged effort to attain to fortune?"

"I? Can you doubt it, uncle?" asked Charles, surprised at the question.

"So you would consent to be patient, to work speadily, to change your habits?"

"If I were to gain anything by it. But why do you ask such a question?

"You shall see," said the veteran, opening the drawer of a small cabinet in which he kept the old newspapers lent him by one of the lodgers.

He searched for some time among the printed sheets, took up one, opened it, and pointing to a certain article, handed it to Charles.

The young man read in a low tone:

"'Propositions have been made to the Spanish government relative to a treasure buried on the banks of the Duero after the battle of Salamanca. It would seem that during this famous retreat, a company which belonged to the first division and which was intrusted with the care of a number of caissons, was separated from the main body of the army and hemmed in by such superior numbers that resistance was impossible. The officer in command, seeing that there was no hope of forcing their way through the enemy's ranks, took advantage of the night to have the caissons buried by some of the soldiers in whom he had the most confidence; then, sure that no one could find them, he ordered his little band to disperse so that each could try separately to escape though the enemy's lines. Some, indeed, succeeded in reaching the division, but the officer and the men who knew the spot where the caissons were buried all perished in attempting to escape. It is said that these caissons contained the army funds, that is to say, a sum of about three millions.'"

Charles stopped and looked at the veteran with sparkling eyes.

"Could you have been one of this company?" he cried.

"I was," answered Vincent.

"You know of the existence of this treasure?"

"I was one of those whom the captain intrusted with its concealment, and the only one who escaped the Spanish bullets."

"Then you could give information that would aid in recovering it?" cried Charles, still more eagerly.

"All the more easily since the captain made us take the line of two hills and a rock as point of reconnaissance; I would recognize the spot as easily as the place where the bed stands in this room."

Charles sprang up with a bound.

"Then your fortune is made!" he cried exultantly; "why haven't you spoken? The French government would have accepted all your propositions."

"Perhaps," said Vincent; "but in any case, they would have been useless."

"Why?"

"Because Spain has refused the required permission; see for yourself."

He handed the young man a second paper, which reported that the request relative to the search for the treasure hidden by the French in 1812 on the banks of the Duero had been refused by the government at Madrid.

"But what is the need of permission?" argued Charles. "What is the use of making an official

search when we can make it privately and quietly? Once on the spot and the ground bought, what would prevent our digging for the treasure? Who would suspect the discovery?"

"I have thought of that many times in these thirty years," answered the soldier; "but where are we to find the sum necessary for the journey and the purchase?"

"Couldn't we apply to those who are richer than we are and let them into the secret?"

"But how to make them believe or to prevent an abuse of confidence if they did believe? And what if we should not be successful? Or if it should turn out, as in the fable you were reading to your cousin the other day, that in the moment of sharing the lion kept the entire booty? We should then have to face the annoyance of a lawsuit besides the fatigue of the journey and the uncertainty of success. What is the use? Is it worth so much trouble, considering the little time I have to live? To the devil with the millions that we must go in search of! I have a pension of 200 francs; thanks to the little one, it's enough for the daily rations and for tobacco; I snap my fingers at the rest as I would at a company of Cossacks!"

"So you mean to let this chance escape?" went on Charles with feverish animation; 'you refuse these riches?"

'For myself, certainly," answered the old man; "but for you, it is another matter. I have seen that you are ambitious, that nothing would be

easier for you than to pass into the society of millionaires. Very well; get together the sum necessary for our journey and I will go with you."

"You? Is it possible."

"Make 2,000 francs and I will give you a fortune; is it agreed?"

"Agreed, uncle!" cried Charles exultantly. Then, collecting himself, he added in dismay: "But how am I to get so much money? I can never do it."

"Work with zeal and bring me your week's pay regularly! I promise you that you will succeed."

"Remember, uncle, a journeyman bookbinder's savings amount to very little."

"That is my affair."

"How many years will it take?"

"You offered to give eighteen awhile ago, with an eye and an arm thrown in."

"Ah, if I were only sure!"

"Of gaining a treasure? I swear it upon the ashes of the Little Corporal."

This was the veteran's most sacred oath; Charles could not but regard the matter as serious. Vincent encouraged him afresh, repeating that he held his fortune in his own hands, and the young man went to bed resolved to make every effort.

But his uncle's confidences had aroused within him such magnificent hopes that he was unable to sleep. He passed the night in a sort of fever, revolving in his mind the most rapid means of earning the necessary sum, deciding upon the disposition of his future riches, and rehearsing one after another,

as realities, all the chimerical plans of which he had hitherto delighted to dream.

When Suzanne came down the following morning, he had already gone to his work.

Vincent, who saw the young girl's astonishment shook his head with a smile but said nothing; he had enjoined the young man to keep the secret and meant to keep it himself. It remained to be seen, moreover, how much persistence Charles would show in his new resolutions.

The first months were the most trying. The young bookbinder had acquired habits which he strove in vain to break; continued work was insupportable to him. It was necessary to renounce that capriciousness which had alone regulated his actions, overcome fatigue and disgust, resist the importunities of his former boon companions. It was a difficult task at first. Many times he lost courage; he was on the point of relapsing into his old wild ways, but the importance of the object in view reinspired him. In bringing to the old soldier the wages that increased from week to week, he always felt a redoubled hope which restored his courage; it was a very small step toward his goal, but still it was a step.

Each day, moreover, the effort grew easier. Man is a vessel whose sails are passions. Abandoned to the winds of the world, borne along by every current it will dash ahead against every rock; but ballasted with good sense, the navigation will be less dangerous, and when the anchor of habit is

finally dropped in the destined port, there will be nothing more to fear.

Thus it proved with the young apprentice. As his life became more regular his tastes took a new direction. Close application to work during the entire day made his leisure at night more pleasant; the abandoning of noisy company lent an entirely new charm to that of his uncle and cousin. The latter had recovered all her friendliness. Occupied solely with Vincent and Charles, she succeeded in transforming every evening into a *fête*. Each day there was some fresh surprise, some sweet attention that strengthened the bonds of affection by added ties of tenderness and joy. Charles was astonished to find in his cousin qualities and charms that he had never taken time to notice. She grew insensibly more necessary to him. Without his knowing it, the object of his life was changed; the hope of the treasure promised by Vincent was not his only incentive; in every action he thought of Suzanne; he wished to deserve her approbation, to become more dear to her. The human soul is a sort of moral daguerreotype: surround it with pictures of order, devotion, courage, illuminate it with the sun of tenderness, and each image will become detached of itself and remain indelibly imprinted. The life that Charles led gradually extinguished his ardent ambitions; he saw a more simple happiness nearer at hand: his paradise was no longer an enchanted land of the Arabian Nights, but a little place peopled with affections that he could encircle with his two arms.

All this came about, however, without his explaining it to himself, without his paying heed to it. The young bookbinder let himself drift along the current of his nature without seeking to study each wave that carried him either backward or forward. His transformation, visible to those who lived with him, had remained a secret to him: he did not know that he was changed, he only felt that he was happier, more content. The only new element that he noticed in his feelings was his love for Suzanne. She entered into all his plans and he could not imagine life without her.

This element of happiness, brought into his future, had modified all the others. The millions, instead of being the principal object, were nothing more than the means; he looked upon them as an important addition, but accessory to his hopes; he wished to know, moreover, with certainty whether his love was returned.

He was pacing the little garret one evening while Vincent and Suzanne chatted at the fireside. They were talking about Charles' first master, who after thirty years of an honest and laborious life had placed on sale his bookbinder's stock before retiring to the country with his wife.

"There is a couple who knew how to make their paradise upon earth," said the old soldier; "always agreed, always good-tempered, always at work!"

"Yes," answered Suzanne with conviction; "the richest might envy their lot!"

Charles, who was passing near the young girl, stopped abruptly.

"Then you want your husband to love you, Suzanne?" he asked, looking at her.

"Of course—if I can," answered the young girl, smiling and flushing a little.

"You can," answered Charles more eagerely, "and you have only to say one word!"

"What word, cousin?" faltered Suzanne with increased agitation.

"That you will be my wife," answered the young bookbinder.

And as he saw his cousin's start of surprise and confusion:

"Don't be troubled, Suzanne," he went on with respectful tenderness; "I have been wanting to ask you this question for a long time. I have kept waiting and waiting for a reason that my uncle knows: but, you see, it came out in spite of me! And now, be frank as I am; don't hide anything that you feel; uncle is here to hear us and will reprove us if we say anything wrong."

The young man had approached his cousin and held one of her hands clasped in his; his voice was trembling, his eyes were moist. Suzanne, quivering with joy, stood with drooping head, and the old soldier watched them both with a smile half-tender, half-bantering.

At last he pushed the young girl gently toward Charles:

"Come, speak, you sly little puss!" he said gayly.

"Suzanne, a word, only one word, I implore you!" went on the young man, who continued to hold his

cousin's hand: "will you have me for your husband?"

With an inarticulate "yes," she hid her face upon the young apprentice's shoulder.

"Eh!" cried Vincent, slapping his knees, "it was hard work to get it out. Your hands—give me your hands and kiss me. I will leave you this evening for your confidences; to-morrow we will talk business."

The next day he took his nephew aside and informed him that the sum necessary for their journey was complete and that they could start for Spain whenever they chose.

This news, which should have delighted Charles, gave him a painful shock. He must leave Suzanne just as they were beginning to exchange their first vows of love; run all the risks of a journey, long, difficult, uncertain, when it would have been so sweet to remain. The young man almost cursed the millions that he must go so far to seek. Since the great object of his life had been changed, his desire for riches had been singularly diminished. What was the need in future of so much money wherewith to purchase happiness? He had found it!

He said nothing to his uncle, however, and declared himself ready.

The old soldier took charge of the preparations; for this purpose he went out several days in succession, accompanied by Suzanne; at last he announced that there was nothing left to be done but

engage their places. As the young girl was absent, he asked Charles to go with him, and as the fatigues of the last few days had rendered his wounds painful, he got into a cab with his nephew.

Vincent had been careful to procure the newspapers that had spoken of the famous treasure on the banks of the Duero; when he was alone with Charles he handed them to him, asking him to see if they did not contain some information that might be of use to them.

The young man reread the details that were already familiar to him, then the announcement of the refusal of the Spanish government, finally the account of several fruitless searches undertaken by Barcelona merchants. He thought the reports at an end when his eyes fell upon a letter signed by one Pierre Dufour.

"Pierre Dufour!" repeated Vincent. "It was the name of the quartermaster of the regiment!"

"Yes, that is his rank," answered Charles.

"God help me! I thought the good fellow in the other world! Let us hear what he has to say; he was in the captain's confidence."

Instead of replying, Charles uttered a cry. He had glanced over the letter and his face had changed.

"Well, what is the matter?" quietly asked Vincent.

"The matter?" repeated the young man. "The matter is that if what this Dufour says is true our journey is useless."

"Why?"

"Because the caissons were not filled with money, but with powder!"

Vincent looked at his nephew and burst out laughing.

"Ah! it was powder!" he cried; "then that was why they took cartridges out before burying the caissons!"

"You knew it?" interrupted Charles.

"I saw it!" answered the old man genially.

"But you have deceived me!" cried the bookbinder; "you did not believe in the existence of the buried millions, and your promise was a farce!"

"It was the truth," answered the soldier gravely. "I promised you a treasure; you shall have it, only we are not going to Spain for it."

"What do you mean?"

"You shall see."

The cab had stopped before a shop; the two got out and entered. Charles recognized his old master's shop, but repaired, repainted and fitted with all the necessary furnishings. He was about to ask an explanation, when his glance fell upon the proprietor's name printed in gold letters above the counter. It was his own name! At the same moment the door of the back shop opened; he saw a fire blazing merrily on the hearth, a table ready spread, and Suzanne, who smilingly made a sign for him to enter.

Vincent leaned toward him, and grasping his arm said:

"Here is the treasure I promised you: a good business that will enable you to live and a good wife who will make you happy. All that you see here has been earned by you and belongs to you. Don't be unhappy if I have deceived you; you would not *drink* happiness, so I did as nurses do, who, when their charges refuse to drink, rub the cup with honey. Now that you know where happiness is and have tasted it, I hope that you will not refuse it."

THE OLD PORTRAITS.

I was still young then and, wholly absorbed in the engrossing interests of the present, I had nothing but contempt for the past. Proud, as all of my age, of a strength that life had not yet tested, I had no fear of anything; I was well content to have been born in my time; I admired myself in my contemporaries. Whenever I looked backward I saw nothing but prejudice, superstition, servility; my generation seemed, indeed, to begin history and, like Atlas, to bear the world upon its shoulders.

Hence my superb disdain for all that was not of my time. I ridiculed bygone fashions; old customs made me shrug my shoulders. I fled before gray hairs. Orphan from the cradle, almost, I had grown up among companions of my own age, without relations and without friends whose affection could reconcile me to old age: it displeased me equally in persons and in things; when it did not make me laugh it filled me with repulsion.

My life was gay although arduous. Drawn into the feverish activity of modern society, I took pleasure in putting myself to the test. I was like a young swimmer who loves to battle against the

waves; but at times weariness overcame me and I would have wished for a quiet spot on the shore in which to rest, for a ray of sunlight to warm me. Shut in by the limits of a narrow mediocrity, I would have longed for those wings of gold that overcome all space; obliged to think of myself above all in order to live, I would have wished for the leisure to think of serving others.

An unexpected event roused me from my labors and from my dreams. I was notified of the death of a country cousin of whom I had never heard and who had left me a legacy. The notary declared my presence indispensable in the settling of the estate, and I decided to take the Bourgogne diligence that would carry me to the village formerly the home of my cousin.

The journey passed pleasantly enough. A fine autumn sun brightened the landscape, the trees were crowned with their last leaves, and on every side could be heard the bells of the teams that were carrying in the harvests or the songs of the peasants who were guiding the plow. On the whole, I was by no means ill pleased with the province until my arrival at ——. Here, however, I was told that I must leave the diligence and proceed on foot to the village where I was expected. There were two leagues to be traversed, over cross-roads that had been gullied by the preceding rains! The daylight was beginning to fade, and a cold October mist was already creeping up from the valley. I set out on my way in a sufficiently bad

humor, cursing the country where there are no cabs to be had and stumbling as best I could along the ruts.

Unfortunately the directions given me at the post-house were insufficient; all the roads through the vineyards looked alike to me; I lost my way several times, and it was dark when I reached the village. I was obliged to go from door to door to find my cousin's house, and when I reached it I found no one there!

A passer-by informed me that Dame Félicité (the housekeeper) was praying at the church. I had to await her return and pace up and down outside the court-yard, my hands in my pockets and my nose buried in the collar of my overcoat.

This sentry duty before the door of my own house would have been pleasant had it not been for my fatigue and the mist that had turned imperceptibly into a fine rain. My patience had come to an end, when there appeared an old servant, half-*bourgeoise* in appearance, whom I recognized by her prayer-book.

At the sight of a stranger standing at the door she stopped and asked me what I wanted.

"Madame Félicité," I answered, shaking with cold.

"You mean mademoiselle," answered the old woman in a sour tone; "I am she. What does monsieur want?"

"First of all, that you open this door!" I cried; "and then that you provide me with the means of

drying myself!" And to forestall any further objections, I gave my name.

I had expected that on hearing my name the old housekeeper would break into apologies; but she looked at me with a sort of defiant hostility.

"Ah! It is monsieur who inherits," she answered slowly. "Then I will go and inform the notary."

"*Au diable!*" I interrupted impatiently; "the first thing is to get under cover; let us go in, Dame Félicité."

"Your pardon, monsieur. I have been put in charge of the house," she answered resolutely. "I mean to put my responsibility under cover first. Monsieur may stay here; Maître Boisseau himself shall decide what I am to do."

And without awaiting my reply, she turned on her heel and disappeared into a narrow lane.

I returned to my sentry duty before my inheritance. At the end of half an hour Félicité reappeared with a little man in spectacles, who introduced himself as Maître Boisseau, and to him I handed the letter he had written me and the papers that testified to my identity. After inspecting them by the light of a lantern, he was good enough to recognize that I was the "person in question," and gave orders that I be admitted.

During these formalities I had been tapping my foot impatiently against the doorstep and cursing the village *tabellions.** When the door was opened

* A scrivener or notary. A functionary that existed in France during the old monarchy.

at last, I told M. Boisseau curtly that I would go to his house on the following day to arrange matters, and I plunged into the dark passage without asking him to follow.

The old servant soon appeared with her lantern and escorted me to an ancient *salon* furnished with an arm-chair and four straw-bottomed chairs, and for only ornament, two plaster casts of Paul and Virginia standing on the chimney-piece between four marble colocynths.

The difficulty I had had in obtaining recognition, added to the walk and the mist, had put me in a bad humor. I made no attempt to hide it, and curtly ordered the housekeeper to make a fire and prepare supper while I took a survey of the rest of the house.

Arming myself with an old tarnished candlestick, I started on a tour of my deceased cousin's home.

Everything was in keeping with the *salon* in which I had been received. The discolored hangings were spotted; here and there newer pieces gave them the look of patched-up rags; the furniture, old-fashioned in form and of rude workmanship, imperfectly furnished the closed rooms; care, comfort, elegance, all were lacking in these old apartments. I saw in them an eloquent testimony to the barbarism of our ancestors and a fresh proof that good sense and good taste had indeed begun only with our generation.

The bedroom was especially curious. The bier-

like bed was inclosed by four moth-eaten green serge curtains; on a table, the drawer of which was missing, was a cracked water-jug and a basin of different color; lastly, along the wall hung some old family portraits calculated to make a connoisseur shudder. Painted at different epochs, they represented personages of various professions; among them I noticed an ecclesiastic, a merchant, a judge, an officer, and, lastly, a big man half-*bourgeois*, half-peasant, who, Dame Félicité informed me, was her late master.

The honest housekeeper had rejoined me to tell me that my supper was ready; I followed her to the *salon*.

I was struck by the appearance of the table. The linen, taken from a reserve store to do me honor, was crossed with yellow streaks; the earthenware plates seemed to be illustrated with dirty arabesques which bore witness to the use of knives and forks; the stemless glasses were not unlike the cups of our old argand lamps; lastly, two infirm salt-cellars offered to the guest by way of seasoning kitchen salt and coarse pepper.

Dame Félicité served me a thin soup in which the butter had been forgotten, and the remains of a setting hen to whom maternal solicitude had left nothing but skin and bones. The housekeeper informed me that this was her departed master's usual supper, but, in a spirit of hospitality, she had added three potatoes on a fair way to decomposition and a morsel of cheese covered with a greenish mold.

I asked for wine; it was a sour, muddy liquid made from the refuse vintage.

More than ever disgusted with my journey, I made up my mind to go to bed. The old servant lighted me to the sleeping-room. The big funereal bed, the smoky old portraits were even more disagreeable to me than at first. I turned abruptly to my conductress and asked if there was an auctioneer in ——.

"An auctioneer?" she repeated; "we don't know any such thing here."

"Then you never have public sales?"

"Oh, yes."

"How do you manage, then?"

"The beadle announces the sale at all the public places in the commune."

"Very well. Notify the beadle to-morrow to announce the sale of everything here."

"Everything? Monsieur keeps nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Not even the pictures?"

"Not even the pictures."

"Ah, monsieur, you cannot think of it; they are family portraits."

"I tell you I shall sell everything. Good-night."

And I took the candle from Félicité, who went out with hands upraised to heaven.

What would she have me do with these daubs? Yes, I will sell you, you absurd caricatures, if it were only out of hatred for the times you represent This melancholy room is yours; these habits

of inelegance and parsimony are those that you have bequeathed; this life, robbed of all the charm of our modern civilization, is your life perpetuated by tradition! Away from here, barbarians! We are not of the same race—there is nothing in common between us.

Talking thus to myself, I had gotten into bed; but exhaustion and ill humor drove sleep away. I took up the volume of history that I had brought to distract me on the journey, then the inventory of my inheritance which the notary had submitted to me.

Here a surprise more agreeable than the others awaited me. The sum total rose to a figure that I was far from anticipating and that made me almost rich. This unexpected discovery singularly diminished my vexation and began to render easier the digestion of my bad supper. I set about examining the inventory in detail, until the figures began to dance before my eyes; finally I lost consciousness of my surroundings.

It soon seemed to me that I heard the sound of footsteps at my bedside. I opened my eyes again and saw a dozen figures grouped about my couch. All wore ancient and diverse costumes, in which I recognized in surprise those of the old portraits that adorned the bedroom. I glanced at the wall to compare them. The frames alone were hanging there! Some miracle had infused the old family portraits with life!

At their head was an old man whom I had not

noticed among the collection. My eyes rested upon him with a curiosity that he appeared to understand.

"You will look in vain for my portrait among these pictures," he said; "in my time no brush would have taken the trouble to reproduce the features of a common serf such as I. But I appreciated the miseries of my condition and by dint of work I succeeded in purchasing my freedom. It is thanks to this that one of my descendants, whom you see here, was enabled to teach himself and become a priest."

The figure indicated approached.

"The poor and the oppressed had need of succor," he said gently. "In the name of Christ I have striven to serve them. I have helped to teach the people, to make them love the good, to fortify them by probity, hope, patience, while my family rose slowly in my shadow and took its place among the honest merchants of the province."

A third speaker here raised his voice.

"This position, handed down by our fathers, I have made greater," he said with some importance. "Named syndic of my corporation, I obtained new privileges for it; we joined together to defend the fruits of labor against violence, and I was one of the founders of that *bourgeoisie* which united public interests under the name of *communes*."

"And I," went on his neighbor, who from his dress and bearing was plainly a magistrate, "I have contributed toward making law prevail over caprice

and equity over influence. The most powerful have had to submit to the decisions of unarmed judges; force has bowed before justice."

"And has become its auxiliary!" added an officer with bronzed skin. "The descendants of the former serf have ended by buckling on the sword and by becoming the defenders of the country and of the law! Since both have belonged to the entire nation, the entire nation has spilled its blood to defend them; in becoming soldiers we have all become gentlemen!"

"Yes," went on another, in whom I recognized my cousin, "my ancestors had won justice and liberty for their descendants. There remained for them to procure riches. I have accepted this *rôle* of ant. Thanks to my labors and to my savings, I have enlarged the estate. I shall leave behind me six times more than I received, and, thanks to the defiant probity of Dame Félicité, all will reach my heir intact. I shall have thus insured him leisure to cultivate his mind, liberty to do good; finally, the happiness of not having to think of himself alone, but of being able to devote his life to others. If he is worthy of such a privilege he will know how to profit by it. He will retain at the bottom of his heart some little gratitude for the man who has prepared this noble task for him; instead of ridiculing him he will know how to sanctify what his old cousin has refrained from spending upon himself by spending it generously upon others."

These last words were spoken so earnestly and with so much feeling that I trembled in spite of myself, and—I awoke!

The light was going out, the old portraits were in their places, the inventory and the history had slipped to the foot of the bed: my vision had been nothing but a dream!

A dream, or rather the voice of conscience and of good sense. These old portraits were indeed the symbols of the past; each one of them reminded me of services rendered by an epoch and by a class. They marked the steps of time along the path of progress. For whosoever knew how to understand them, there was here a glorification of the work accomplished by our ancestors.

Filled with a sudden light, I stretched out my hand to the half-obliterated canvases as though they could hear and see me.

"Ah, forgive me!" I cried; "forgive me, old soldiers of the ages! I understand now the respect that is due you. All the harvests gathered to-day in which I took such pride were sown by your hands; the present is only the consequence of the past and tradition the instrument of progress. Forgive me, you who knew the tree of knowledge when it was only young, but have watered it with your sweat and with your blood. I understand now that my pride was ingratitude, and henceforth I will reserve for you a sacred place in my memory."

And you, too, vestiges of a time that we do not understand, rusticities of our fathers, long-forgotten customs, you shall no longer excite my mockery or my anger, for I shall know that you are the still visible ruins of a civilization that has fulfilled its purpose.

THE END.

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